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OR,
The Lame Horse Miner's Quest.

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TIM," "WHISTLING JACOB," "JACK-
O'-LANTERN," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A GREENHORN AND HIS MONEY.

"ROBBED of two thousand dollars?"

"Two thousand in hard cash!"

"And on the Express train?"

"Yes."

"It beats the dickens! Here that train has been systematically worked for months by some man, or men, and every effort of the management to nab the thieves has proved useless. Thousands of dollars have gone, and the work

"AN OLD-FASHIONED POCKETBOOK, OR 'WALLET,' AN' IT'S EMPTY—BEEN GONE THROUGH WITH BY THE ROBBER."

still flourishes. Some of the best detectives of New York City have tried to solve the mystery, but all to no purpose. The matter is getting serious!"

The scene was at the Grand Central Depot, and the speakers were two employees of the K. & Q. Railroad. The well-informed reader will at once perceive that no road of that name has a terminus at the Grand Central, but by the above initials it must figure in this record of a puzzling case. For obvious reasons the real name of the great railroad will be withheld.

While the two men talked they had an auditor, but one so insignificant—in their opinion—that, while they would have refrained from speaking freely in the hearing of any adult outsider, they did not feel it necessary to be reserved with him around. Moreover, a certain connection which he had for some time had with the K. & Q. made him seem about the same as an employee.

This auditor was a lad of sixteen or seventeen years, and if his name had been requested of any one around the station who knew him, the reply would have been "Sunrise Saul."

The name was more in the line of Western ways than those of the East, but it applied very well to him. He was the "news-agent" on certain trains of the K. & Q.—in other words, he sold papers and books to the passengers.

The employees moved away, and Saul heard no more from them, but they left him in a thoughtful mood. This was not the first time he had heard of robberies on the railroad. He was popular with the trainmen, and they had talked with him as freely as though he had been one of the "crew," and it was only the fact that there had been a fresh robbery that interested him.

"Queer!" he thought, seriously. "I don't see who is at it. Criminals have marked the road and are working it shrewdly. Either they know the detectives who have been set to catch them, or else they are working in big luck. If I ran the road I should regard the case as right serious, and I presume that is just the way that the managers do look at it."

He shifted his package of papers to his other arm, and turned his thoughts to his own affairs.

In ten minutes a train would leave the station, and he was to go upon it. It was one of the most important which went over the road, being an Express, with but few stops by the way. As a result, it was well patronized, being popular with business men and long-distance travelers.

This particular train had given Saul his sobriquet—it left at an early hour, and it was a common opinion that the lad had to be astir at sunrise to get around with his papers. As the train always left at the same hour, and the rising of the sun was very irregular, this idea was open to criticism, but it went unchallenged, and all regular patrons knew "Sunrise Saul."

A glance through the waiting-room showed Saul that the train was to be well patronized on this morning, and he was correspondingly pleased.

An abundance of passengers meant good sale for his papers and books.

Among the passengers-elect were two men who finally came and stood near Saul.

"I wish you a pleasant journey, brother," the newsboy heard one observe.

"Thank'ee, sir," was the reply; "it will be pleasant."

"Have you ever been in Boston before?"

"No, I ain't."

"You will find it a rather pleasant town, albeit the streets of the business part make about the worst jumble to be found anywhere, on account of numerous crooks and corners."

"I guess I kin get around."

"I would advise that you deliver the money into the hands of the Society at once, when you arrive at your destination."

"Oh! I've got it safe in my coat so that it can't get lost."

"You must remember that there are some very skillful pickpockets, confidence men and general swindlers in all our large cities."

"I know, parson; I know; but they must git up early in the mornin' ter fool old Abner Plunket. It wa'n't fur nothin' that I was made deacon o' the Haybottom Church."

"I infer that your election to that position was due to your sound theological views, and general uprightness."

"That's it, parson."

"Well, to outwit rascals, one must have a good deal of wisdom which is of the purely worldly sort."

"I've got that, too!" declared Mr. Plunket, with unbounded confidence.

"Your brethren at Haybottom have raised this money with much effort, moved by the sufferings of the heathen in Africa, and it would be sad to have it lost. I presume you are a community of farmers?"

"That's jest it, but—"

"Then the amount was gained by most laborious means, and you have a sacred trust. Look out for the money!"

"Say, parson, d'ye think I can't take keer o' four hund'ud dollars?" demanded Abner Plunket, with some warmth.

"My dear sir, I merely gave you a word of advice."

"You mustn't think that, jest because you live in New York, an' me in Connecticut, that I ain't cut my eye-teeth! I'd like ter trade hosses with ye, parson—"

"Thank you, Mr. Plunket, but I have not questioned your proficiency in that line. Well, a word to the wise is sufficient. Having given that word, I will leave you. Good-by, brother!"

"Good-by, parson, an' good-luck be with ye."

The speakers shook hands and separated, the unnamed man leaving the depot.

"A city minister, and a countryman of the same denomination," thought Sunrise Saul, who had been an attentive observer. "Mr. Abner Plunket is inclined to be over-confident. Hope he won't fall afoul of the train-workers, and get robbed!"

The man from Haybottom did not look like one especially fitted for the task of looking out for Number One. He was, as appearances indicated, a man who had spent all his life in the rural districts. The color of his hands and face was a reddish brown, so deep that one might almost wonder if he was of the Caucasian race. His hair was full to overflowing with hay-seed—this was a figurative fact. He was extremely unsophisticated and green—this was a literal fact.

Having been left alone, he moved nearer to the gate, and another couple took his place, pausing where Sunrise Saul could overhear their conversation.

They were an aged gentleman and a young lady.

The former was a person of large frame and once powerful arms, but his days as an athlete were gone. Extreme old age and debility were upon him. He could still stand quite erect, but only for a brief time. Usually he leaned heavily upon a stout cane, and, even then, his limbs trembled. His hair and beard were nearly white.

His companion was small, young, bright and pretty. She had golden hair, and was a charming young lady, to look at.

"Grandfather," she said, "there are no vacant seats here."

"Never mind, Emmie," was the reply; "it is nearly time for the train to start."

"But you ought not to stand; I will ask some one to rise and give you a seat."

"No, no; do nothing of the kind, my dear. The lack of a seat is but a small trouble."

"Poor grandfather!" sighed the girl.

"Do you think we shall be in time, Emmie?"

"I hope so."

"You do not speak hopefully."

"I have no means of knowing the probabilities in the case."

"For once, traveling by rail will seem slow."

"Every hour will take us nearer to Uncle Ralph."

"And take him nearer to his trial."

"We will hope for the best."

The old gentleman shook his head slowly.

"At your age one is more hopeful than at mine, my dear. Young persons see the bright side of life, and are not to be cast down. By the time one has lived to near four-score years he sees that, in the majority of cases, events do not transpire in accordance with his hopes. In this world we are more often disappointed than the reverse—but let me not discourage you. If I were the James Enonbridge of thirty years ago, I would not fear to grapple with this case. But I am old, old, old!"

The girl touched his wrinkled hand.

"I will be your guide and your staff!" she murmured, softly.

"Bless you, Emmie—bless you! If Ralph is convicted, you will be all that is left to me."

"He must not—shall not be convicted!" declared Emmie, with depth of feeling which sent fresh color to her pretty cheeks.

Again Mr. Enonbridge shook his head.

"I'm afraid you know but little of law."

"I hate the law!" declared the girl, her eyes flashing.

"If it were always just, it would be some-

thing so grand that no praise could properly describe it; but appearances are often deceptive. In such cases, the law becomes a creature to be dreaded. It is so now."

"Ralph is innocent!" Emmie asserted.

"I would swear to it, child."

"The man who arrested him was a wretch!"

"He was only the agent of others. We must not blame him, nor yet the prosecuting officers."

"But think of our Ralph in prison!"

"I do think of him. I can see the picture in my mind all too plainly; I can see my boy—the son of my old age—incarcerated in a cold cell. Just Heaven! it almost breaks my heart!"

The white-haired old gentleman lifted his disengaged hand to his forehead, and pressed it there to deaden the pain he was enduring.

"We are going to his aid," added Emmie.

"A young girl and a weak old man."

"That does not mean that we shall fail."

"We must not!"

"We shall not! Uncle Ralph shall be proven innocent—I swear it!"

CHAPTER II.

A WILD WESTERN MAN EXPLAINS.

THE doors which led to the big heart of the depot were thrown open, and the passengers moved forward.

As Emmie made the last declaration, she had raised one hand as though also making solemn oath to what she said. However desperate might be the case of that Ralph Enonbridge, who was in the grasp of the law, he could not but have felt encouraged and pleased if he had seen her then.

Even prison walls cannot make the sympathy of a pretty girl a matter of indifference to a young man.

Emmie quickly aroused, as she saw that the way was open to the train.

"Let us hasten," she advised. "We want to secure seats on the left side of our car."

"And why the left?" Enonbridge asked.

"Because it is the cool side, being toward the north. The sun beats in, upon the other side!"

"You have observed closely; for one who has traveled so little."

"I use my eyes at all times."

"And bright ones they are."

The old gentleman forgot his troubles for the time, and bent a loving look upon his companion.

Emmie was his only granddaughter, and he loved her next to his son.

All of this conversation, up to the time when the doors were opened, had been heard by Sunrise Saul. It was a small matter in his experience. While in the depot, as well as on the train, he frequently heard such bits of conversation.

A railroad sees romance and tragedy galore. Lovers on some pleasure-trip; newly-married couples on their bridal tours; men and women going to the death-bed or funeral of some dear friend. Sorrow, happiness, gayety, plot and crime—how strangely all these are mixed on a train!

Saul made his way to the Express with his papers, and for the time he forgot Mr. and Miss Enonbridge, as well as the man from Haybottom, Connecticut.

Ten minutes later, the train pulled out of the Grand Central, and the travelers were fairly off.

There was but little satisfaction to be gained from the journey until the Harlem was passed, but when they were at last on open ground, the newsboy set out to supply such of his customers as desired reading matter.

First of all, he went through with his morning papers.

Among the familiar faces he saw were some he had beheld that morning for the first time.

A nasal voice arrested his progress in the middle of one of the cars.

"Say, boy, is there any partic'lar news this mornin'?" was the inquiry.

"Lots of it," Saul briefly replied.

"Hev you got a one cent paper?"

"Nothing short of two cents."

"I s'pose I kin pay it, but two cents is a good 'eal o' money ter put out fur sech nonsense—an' I bought a paper only last week!"

The grumbler was Mr. Abner Plunket, and he had a seat directly in front of Mr. Enonbridge and Emmie. The other half of the seat was without an occupant, other than a rough traveling "grip."

Abner went down for his money, and, after a vexatious delay, brought up the necessary two cents. He bought a paper, and Saul passed on.

"Takes money ter travel," remarked Abner, looking at Mr. Enonbridge.

There was no reply.

"I can't stint myself, though, fur I'm a deacon in our church, an' some kind o' style is necessary."

"You seem to be doing well," Emmie remarked.

"I be. Got plenty o' money in my pocket, too."

"I would not mention the fact."

"No? Why not?"

"You may lose the money."

"How kin I?"

"All travelers are not honest."

"Why, that's what the New York parson said ter me! Strikes me you folks don't put much conference in my judgment. Say, do I look green?"

"Not in the least."

"I thought not!"

Mr. Plunket had been waxing indignant, but his mood completely changed. He looked over his spectacles at Emmie in a benign fashion.

"I'm a deacon in a church," he added.

Having heard this observation once before, Emmie did not think it necessary to reply, and Plunket finally turned around and devoted his time to the newspaper.

In the meanwhile, Saul was making his way through the train. During the first part of the trip he had but little leisure time. When he had tried the passengers on the dailies, he made a second journey among them with books.

By the time that he had done all this, the State of New York had been left behind, and they were in the Land of Steady Habits, otherwise Connecticut.

Saul came to a stop in the smoking-car.

All was going at a gallop there, so to speak. The devotees of whist were having their fill, and so was the car—its fill of tobacco smoke. The air was blue with it.

Saul soon found something to interest him. Near at hand was a big man in a flannel shirt, slouched hat and garments generally erratic. Withal, he was fairly well-dressed, but not in fashion.

"They call this yer' concern a cigar!" he observed, flourishing the article in question. "Durn me ef it ain't a dandy! I'd rather set on the ruff of a house an' breathe the chimbley smoke—durn me ef I hadn't! Cigars! Bah! I'd rather have a cabbage, an' know jest w'ot stockin' up ag'in'. I had, b'Judas!"

"I keep cigars," put in Saul, quietly.

"Do ye?"

"Yes."

"All right; keep 'em!"

The speaker spoke wrathfully, and then moderated his voice and added:

"Young feller, take a word o' advice from an old stager who's seen forty-seven year o' experience—reform, while ye kin! Let up on yer evil ways afore ye git sent ter the Bastile. Want ter sell me a cigar, hey? Say, now, I bought this cigar on a car, an' I don't want no more traid cigars. I don't, b'Judas!"

"I guarantee my cigars, sir."

"That settles it; wouldn't smoke one now ef ye was ter give it to me. I've found that all that's guaranteed by an Eastern chap is bad, an' it's got ter be mighty bad afore he'll guarantee it. Them's my ideas, an' I'm Buck Jockway, right from Lame Horse, Montana!"

"All good cigars out your way, I suppose?" suggested a dapper dude, with a fragile yellow mustache.

"You s'pose!" retorted Buck Jockway. "What biz have you ter s'pose? Did you ever s'pose the truth? Say, ef I could think up lies as fast as you kin s'pose 'em, I'd git a job as reporter fur a newspaper!"

Mr. Jockway glared at the dude, and looked so fierce and big and dangerous that the poor little dude's heart crawled right up in his throat and near suffocated him.

"Cigars!" scoffed Jockway. "Say, ef you ever seen a cigar in my part o' Montana, you prove it an' I'll prove you a liar! We smoke pipes out thar, every man—Isaac on us; we do, b'Judas! D'ye think I'm a liar?"

The dude faintly disclaimed any such opinion.

"All right—all right. Me an' you won't quarrel, fur I'd hate like sin ter see a human bein' die at your stage of existence. You remind me of a young duck afore he's got any more nor a thin crop of yaller ha'r on him. Live, critter, live; an', ef you kin raise a whisker, you'll be a man afore yer gran'mother, b'Judas!"

Here Mr. Jockway slapped his knee with a hand ponderous enough to break more fragile

bones, and looked around as though challenging any one to dispute his assertion.

"You're a long way from Lame Horse," Saul remarked.

"Young feller, I be."

"Going back?"

"Dead or alive!"

"You don't look like one liable to die."

"I be liable."

"Heart disease?"

"Bullets!"

Jockway nodded shortly, shut one eye and looked across the car as though taking aim at somebody.

"Don't keer a rap fur Eastern gunners," he added, "but the varmints may git the drop on me. Say, d'ye s'pose I've come all the way ter this heathen land fur fun? Nary! B'Judas! I'm hyar fur biz, an' guns settles it. Ef I gits tunneled, my remnants goes back ter Lame Horse ter be planted under the cottonwood tree on my claim. Got an envelope in my pocket w' the necessary cash, an' a written line: 'This is B. Jockway's clay. Express him ter Lame Horse, care o' Peleg Smith, all charges paid!' See?"

Sunrise Saul regarded the big Western man with curiosity. Jockway was rough and loud-voiced, but his conversation to the contrary notwithstanding, the newsboy did not set him down as a tough.

"You're on the war-path, then?"

"Young feller, I be."

"And have come East for revenge?"

"I hev. Guns settles it!"

Jockway's jaws closed with a snap, and his big blue eyes sparkled in a suggestive way.

"When I run up ag'in' him," he added, "him or me goes up the flume!"

CHAPTER III. UNDER SUSPICION.

THERE was something so ominous and startling in Jockway's manner, as well as in his words, that no one ventured a reply. He was silent for a moment, then he slowly inquired:

"Say, what's the sentiment hyar East as ter shootin' a female woman?"

This question drew divers unfriendly glances upon the man from Lame Horse.

"The sentiment is that such a wretch ought to be strung up without judge or jury!" declared a laboring man in a calico "jumper."

"It ain't jest right, I admit, but sarcumstances alters cases."

"Not in Connecticut."

"No?"

"Not an alter!"

"S'pose the woman was a she-devil?"

"She'd be a woman, all the same."

"Mebbe you like her sort?"

"All women are taken care of in Connecticut."

"Humph! Mister, I'll bet my last month's find o' dust ag'in' a blunt pick that the West kin give the East two p'int, an' then beat it out on gallantry ter women o' the right sort. We adore 'em, an' don't make no bones o' sayin' so. Nary! But when it comes to a she-devil—"

Buck Jockway paused, hesitated, and then the blood flowed to his broad face until its hue was a deeper red than the bronze of the gold-diggings sun. He held up his athletic hand.

"I wish I had her here!" he added, in a voice which was at once low and intense.

There was something very striking about the man. He weighed at least two hundred pounds, and it was nearly all bone and muscle. He was a broad-shouldered Hercules. He was an impressive figure as he sat there, and the suggestive movement of his hands, and his change of color, only served to bring out more prominently the calmness he preserved.

It was not a natural calmness.

"Do you mean," asked the laboring man, "that you'll kill the woman?"

"Pard, I've come East fur revenge! He must die, an' she will be durned lucky to pull through alive!"

"Suppose they shoot, too?"

Buck Jockway shrugged his shoulders.

"D'ye s'pose they kin get the drop on me?"

"I don't know."

"I'm a Western man!"

"We have some shooters here East."

Buck laughed heartily.

"B'Judas! I'd like ter see 'em! Trot 'em out! Shooters? Why, durn my boots! I'd stack up ag'in' a whole regiment o' yer Eastern dudes. But that ain't ter the p'int; you needn't be afeerd that my enemies will git the drop on me. The question is, how shall I do up the female ef I don't use a six-shooter?"

He contracted his brows, and studied the

point as though it were an ordinary, yet perplexing question.

"Has she really injured you?"

Jockway sat up hurriedly.

"Injured me!" he echoed, in a deep base voice.

"Why, man alive, she an' her partner hev—"

Thus far he spoke explosively, but he checked himself suddenly, meditated, and shook his head. Then he rose abruptly:

"Mebbe I'll take your advice an' get square with her some other way," he added, "but, ef I get eye on her partner, that man will hev a tunnel made through him. My 'six' is a forty-one caliber, an' I kin use it. Yes, b'Judas!"

With this final assertion, the man from Lame Horse passed out of the car to that at the rear. The open-eyed passengers watched him curiously.

"A bloodthirsty villain!" declared one.

"I guess he's only rough," remonstrated a second.

"Rough! How about the killing of a woman! Would that be only rough?"

"He hasn't killed her. Besides, his ways are Western ways."

"I doubt if he was ever West," interrupted a third speaker.

"Why so?"

"He's a sham."

"He don't look like an Eastern man."

"Looked to me like a man who had taken great pains to make up as a Westerner, and was out for cheap notoriety."

"Anyhow, he's a scoundrel!" affirmed the first speaker. "I never have seen a more villainous face. Why, his eyes fairly glittered with evil. I'd hate to meet him in a dark night, if he had a revolver and I had five dollars!"

"He may be an escaped murderer!"

How much longer this conversation continued Sunrise Saul did not know. Once more he took his case of books, and began to make a tour of the cars.

The train was flashing along the rails at a high rate of speed. Rocks, trees, houses, villages and cities appeared and disappeared like rushing specters. At the south, now and then, a glimpse of Long Island Sound could be seen, its waters glittering in the midsummer sun.

Saul's mind was wholly on his work, and he had forgotten all individual cases, but several old acquaintances were suddenly recalled to his mind as he reached a certain point in one of the cars.

A nasal voice arose and inquired:

"Boy, hev you got Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress' with you?"

This peculiar question led Saul to use his eyes more freely, and he saw Mr. Abner Plunket, of Haybottom, Conn., looking gravely at him over his old spectacles.

And by Plunket's side was Buck Jockway.

"No, sir," Saul responded; "I haven't the book."

"That's odd!"

"It would be rather heavy for railroad use."

"It's pesky good!" asserted Mr. Plunket.

"No doubt. Can I sell you anything else?"

"Not o' that trash."

Abner gave a snort so contemptuous that Saul went on and left him.

When Buck Jockway changed cars he went to complete a group which had a good deal of interest, if not of romance, in it.

First, there was the man who claimed to be from Lame Horse, with his mission of vengeance—with a marked man and a marked woman who had done some grievous wrong, and upon whom he intended to be revenged.

Next, there was Abner Plunket, openly informing people that the church at Haybottom had raised a sum of money for the heathen in Africa; that he was the agent carrying it to Boston; that he had the money in his pocket at that minute.

And back of this assorted pair were Mr. Enonbridge and Emmie, bound for some point at the East to give aid to Ralph Enonbridge, who had gotten into trouble with the law.

As Saul passed on, Jockway turned to his companion.

"What's that I understood ye ter say about bunion?" he innocently asked.

"Hey?" questioned Plunket.

"You asked the boy fur a bunion-cure, ef I understood correct."

"Yew didn't so understand."

"No?"

"It was Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress.'"

"What's that?"

"A book."

"On bunion?"

"Great land! no; it's a religious book."

"B'Judas! that so? I never heerd of it be."

fore. Lots o' new-fangled things been got out sence I went ter Lame Horse."

Mr. Jockway swerved around and looked at Mr. James Enonbridge.

"Be you a capitalist?" he asked.

"No, sir. Why?"

"You look it, an' I kin place some o' the best minin' stock in Montana fur the right man. Seventy shares in the Snicker Mine, Lame Horse Camp. Durned good chance ter invest!"

"I have no money."

"Want ter borrow?"

"No, sir."

"Will lean any sum on a good I. O. U. Got it all out o' the Snicker Mine—so named, 'cause the gold-fernd made me snicker when I struck it rich. See?"

Jockway was full of talk, but he received but little encouragement. To his last question he obtained no answer, and Enonbridge showed such strong disinclination to talk that the miner had to return to Abner Plunket.

The two did not become deeply interested in each other. Buck's thoughts ran on erratic subjects, while Abner evinced a strong desire to tell all about his farm, his garden and his cows, subjects which Jockway regarded with derision.

Later the man from Lame Horse was severely taken to task for saying "B'Judas!" and he soon tired of Abner and returned to the smoking-car.

The character of the day changed. The air had been sultry from the first, and the swift march of black clouds was at last followed by rain.

It came with the impetuosity of a summer shower, and beat against the car-windows furiously. After that there was no lull, and even the trainmen were surprised.

No fiercer shower had ever been seen along the line.

The passengers rather enjoyed it; the air was greatly improved, and they felt sure that it would cease before they reached Boston.

They did not reach Boston that night, however.

CHAPTER IV.

A MISSING POCKETBOOK.

THAT day was a most unlucky one on the K. & Q. Railroad. Newspapers, referring to the affair afterward, recorded a remarkable rainfall all through the East, with great damage done by water and lightning.

The particular train to which attention has been drawn had its share of misfortune.

Shortly after noon it came to a stop, and it was seen that a red flag was planted ahead. They had reached a wash-out, and were brought to a halt in a place remote from any village. Just four hours were consumed in passing the place. The rain had ceased, but not the newly-formed streams of water, and it was no easy matter for the gang of men to lay a temporary track, as they had been sent to do.

At last they were off again, and the travelers consoled themselves with the thought that, if nothing happened, they would reach Boston soon after dark.

Something did happen—a good deal happened.

They had to run very slowly on account of the damage done by rain, and the fall of night found them a good deal short of Boston. They did not get any nearer for some hours to come.

The engineer stood at his post, anxiously looking ahead. He could see little except a black area. The sky was completely overcast; the night was intensely dark; and the rain, which was again falling, shut off what little view remained.

The train was passing a hilly region at slow speed. The engineer knew the way well, but he had to trust all to chance on this occasion.

Suddenly there was rattle and tremor of the locomotive, and he promptly reversed. Another moment and the engine went over on its side, and the cars came sliding on in a jam.

Nothing but the moderate speed saved them from a general and disastrous smash-up. As it was, some of the trainmen and passengers were bruised and shaken up, but not one was severely injured.

They came hurrying out to find themselves in a rocky cut, with a gap in the track ahead that a full gang of men could not have repaired in three hours.

"Hung up!" tersely remarked the conductor.

"Can't we get through?"

It was the anxious voice of James Enonbridge. With visions of his son before him, he would almost have given his last dollar to be at the end of the line.

"Do you see that river ahead of us?"

"Yes."

"Do you see any way to pass it?"

"Is the bridge gone?"

"There was never any bridge there; the river is one started by this flood of rain, and there is no telling when we shall get through. I see no sign of men at work on the other side, and we can't repair the damage."

"Can't we get around?"

"No."

"I would hire a team—"

"There is no house within three miles. We may as well make up our mind to stay all night."

The words fell upon Enonbridge's ears with painful force, but Buck Jockway laughed heartily.

"That's good!" he declared; "we'll have some fun out of it. There's nothin' like roughin' it. Eh, boy?"

He slapped Sunrise Saul heartily on the shoulder as he asked the question, but the newsboy did not experience any great pleasure. He had no liking for the prospect.

Once more the rain came down heavily, and the passengers retreated to the cover of the cars. Those who were wise at once secured what food was to be obtained on the train.

"I hate ter sleep here," observed Abner Plunkett, "for I've got money in my pocket—"

He placed his hand against the indicated pocket as he spoke, and then stopped short.

If the money was there, he did not feel it.

His pocketbook was gone.

Somewhat flustered, he felt in other pockets, but a conclusion was soon forced upon him—the valuable property was not on his person.

"Sakes alive!" he exclaimed; "I've dropped my money. It must 'a' fell out where I set."

He examined the seat he had occupied, as well as the floor below, but failed to find the missing article.

"It's pesky strange!" he muttered.

"Where did you keep your money?"

The question was asked by Sunrise Saul. That alert young man no sooner heard Abner's complaint than he had a well-defined theory.

"It was in a long, flat pocketbook," Plunkett explained, "an' in my inside coat pocket."

"You have been sitting or standing all the time, haven't you?"

"Yes."

"Have not lain down at all?"

"No."

"Mr. Plunkett, you've been robbed!"

"Robbed!"

"Yes."

"Good land! how could that be done? It couldn't! How could anybody git at it in my pocket? I'd like ter know."

"Guess you don't know how cunning professional thieves are."

The Haybottom citizen groaned.

"An' the parson warned me, in New York!"

"You should have taken his advice."

"I thought I knowed it all!"

"Don't be discouraged; you know more now than you did before."

"But that money is gone, an' it was raised fur the heathen in Afrikay by our church society. Oh! oh! Why, our parson talked fur the good cause until he was red in the face, an then we drummed up all the town. We got all the sinners ter contribute by sendin the children ter bone them—it's the only way we kin work the sinners at Haybottom. An' now that money is gone!"

Abner wrung his hands and looked the image of dismay.

"You had better see the conductor."

"Will he make it good?" was the eager inquiry.

"You've got a good deal of cheek, Mr. Plunkett. Why should he? No, sir; after all the warnings you have received, you've been plucked like a silly pigeon, and you will have to bear the loss. I presume the church society will not prosecute you, if you pay them out of your own pocket!"

There was a spice of mischief in the last words, and it had due effect. Abner turned pale. It was bad enough to lose the money, but, if he had to bear the loss, it was simply overwhelming.

The amount was not so very large, but Mr. Plunkett valued money highly.

He went to the conductor, while Saul meditated.

There had been another robbery on the train. Who had done it?

Of course there was a chance that it was one of ordinary interest, only, but, when the past was considered, Saul could not but wonder if it was the work of the person who had been systematically robbing passengers on the train for some time past.

Plunkett was not the man an adept pickpocket would select for a victim by his appearance, but Abner had talked freely.

To whom?

Saul remembered the group in the car. Buck Jockway had been the old farmer's immediate neighbor; back of them had sat James Enonbridge and Emmie; and in front had sat two elderly ladies of very respectable appearance.

Remembrance of Jockway naturally aroused some suspicion, but Plunkett had been moving around freely since the first stoppage of the day.

He might have been robbed when standing outside, after the recent accident.

The man from Haybottom was not making out well with the conductor. The latter at once set the case down as one of the mysterious robberies, and spoke with great caution. He wished to avoid having the case made public, and did not let Plunkett know that other men had been robbed on the road, of late, in strange frequency.

A friendly brakeman sauntered up to Saul.

"Another robbery, old man."

"Yes, Jim."

"You want to grip your cash."

"What do you make of it, Jim?"

"I wish I knew who sat beside the hayseed."

"It was Jockway, the man from the West."

You saw him in the smoking-car."

"Rather! Also, I heard some give the opinion that the man was not from the West!"

"He looks it."

"So he does."

"I think Jockway a Western man, but he may be a thief all the same."

"Say, can't we 'pipe' this case?"

"How?"

Jim took a big chew of tobacco, and gave the choice morsel a few rolls in his mouth before making reply.

"We've got to lay over here all night, Saul."

"Yes, Jim."

"Then you can bet your last dollar that there will be more fun. A chance like this the mysterious train-worker never had before, and never will again. He will improve the chance. When all the passengers are asleep, the robber will try to get in his work, expecting a rich harvest. Saul, we must turn detectives and watch—more, we must nab him!"

"Jim, we'll try the racket!" the youth declared.

CHAPTER V.

THE WESTERN MAN SEES HIS ENEMY.

WHEN another hour had elapsed, the passengers were in a condition of general stillness, if not of repose. In the smoking-car some worldly-minded men had settled down with the resolution of playing whist until daybreak, but they were exceptions to the rule.

In the other cars men and women alike had placed themselves in the most comfortable positions to be had, and were trying to get needed rest. No "sleeper" was attached to the train.

Sunrise Saul was in the smoking-car. There was still sale for cigars, and, as it did not seem likely that the mysterious robber would go at his lawless work until time had been given for all to get to sleep, Saul did not throw over his shoulder the chance to see all of his stock that he could.

He approved of the whist-playing. While that pastime went on, smoking would continue.

Being on the alert to see every man who was in need of a fresh cigar, the vender was not thinking of much of anything else.

He was suddenly put in the way of other matters.

The front door of the car suddenly opened with such violence that it barely escaped Saul, and then swept back with a bang. The youth turned in surprise, and saw Buck Jockway standing beside him. But there was a great change in the miner's manner.

Previously, he had been noticeable for his strong, steady composure and air of power; and it had not left him even when he made known the alleged errand which had taken him to the East.

Now his face was flushed, his eyes sparkled, and his muscular form trembled with excitement.

He swept a glance around the car which almost startled Saul—it was one of rage and tiger-like hatred.

"Whar is he?" Buck then cried, hoarsely.

"Where is who?" Saul replied.

"The man!"

"What man?"

"The one thet come in hyar."
 "No one has come in here."
 Jockway seized his companion's arm in a grasp so tenacious as to be painful.
 "Don't ye lie ter me!" he exclaimed, threateningly, and then grated his teeth like a wild animal.

"No one has come in here for half an hour—"
 "You lie!"

Buck gave Saul a savage shake, whereupon the youth's eyes sparkled angrily.

"Let go my arm, or I'll knock you down!" he commanded, resolutely.

Jockway's jaw fell. For a moment he forgot his errand. Proud of his strength as a jungle tiger might be, and holding all men of the East in profound contempt, he was amazed to hear a mere boy address him thus.

"Eh?" he muttered, blankly.
 "Your touch is offensive. Take your hand off, or I will let go at you."

"You?"
 "Nobody else."

"You—a kid—hit me?"

"And knock you down!" coolly added the newsboy. "You may have had the nightmare, but I am not inclined to let you crush the bones of my arm. Let go!"

The man from Lame Horse promptly obeyed.
 "I'll do it, b'Judas! You've got sand, you hev; an' I'm proud ter know ye."

He cast an admiring glance up and down Saul's well-developed form, but suddenly started.

"I was forgettin' one thing. The man—the man! Don't tell me you don't know whar he is!"

"No one has come in here. What man was it?"

Again Jockway's eyes glittered, and his expression was ominous.

"'Twas the man I'm a-huntin'!" he hissed, his big fingers worked nervously around one certain pocket in his coat.

"I don't understand—"
 "I come East ter kill him!"

The words recalled the Western man's first account of his mission, and the explanation was sufficient.

"Do you mean that you have seen him?"
 "I hev!"

"Where?"

"In the forrud car. I'd fell asleep, and was woke up by some one monkeyin' around me. A man was lookin' down inter my face, an', as I got awoke, I looked up inter his'n. Boy, who d'ye reckon I seen? The light fell on him, an' I seen that man!"

Jockway's rude, dramatic force was having due effect upon Saul.

"And then?" he breathlessly asked.
 "He run!"

The miner swept a glance through the car.

"Ef he didn't come in hyar he got off the platform, an' I'll find him yet. He's one o' the passengers, an' I'll find the critter afore I quit. When I do, b'Judas! 'twor't take long ter settle it!"

Wheeling, he left the car.

All this was of deep interest to Sunrise Saul, and he lost no time in following. As he descended the platform steps he saw Jockway by the car, and saw him draw something from his pocket.

He held it up a little, and the light fell upon it.

It was a revolver!

Saul felt that he ought to interfere. Plainly, Buck Jockway intended to kill his enemy if he found him, and the newsboy did not underestimate the gravity of such a deed. But he was so absorbed in strange Mr. Jockway, his ways and his tragic purpose, that he could only watch and let him work.

The Lame Horse citizen passed swiftly along the side of the car, his keen gaze always busy. He scanned the next platform, the car-trucks and the rocks, and bushes by the track. Somewhere there his enemy might be in ambush. There was danger that he, too, might be armed, and ready to shoot, but Buck cared not a rush for that.

All he asked was to find the man.

He was burning with a desire for vengeance. If he found his enemy, one of them must die.

It is possible that Jockway did not fully realize the enormity of the act he contemplated; and it was also possible that, as had been alleged, the man was not what he seemed.

In no place did he see his enemy, so he passed on to the rear of the train. Then he returned on the other side, walking forward until he reached the fresbet-made river. He could not go around the locomotive or the tender, for they lay in the angry water.

He turned slowly and saw Saul.

"You here?" he muttered.

"Yes."

"Why?"

"To see what you would do."

Buck brought his big hand down upon the boy's shoulder forcibly.

"Say, I like you!" he declared.

"Do you?"

"Yes, b'Judas! You are jest my kind an' I'd like ye fur a pard. What say?"

"In the killing of your man?"

Again Jockway's thoughts shifted.

"Beats the dickens whar that feller went; he got out o' sight like a jack-rabbit on the jump, b'Judas! But he's nigh—he's nigh, an' I'll hev him yit!"

"Are you sure 'twas your man?"

"Sure? I saw him once. Mebbe the woman is nigh, too. Wish I knowed, fur she couldn't run away in fashion like his; but I never have set eyes on her. B'Judas she's the worst o' the two; a mild little lump o' pooty flesh ter look at, but a fiend inside. D'ye know, I can't decide whether ter shoot her! It don't seem jest the right turn o' the cards, but 'twould save mankind a pile o' sufferin'. She is worse at heart than a tigress!"

Saul listened while the big miner rambled on. There was no chance to think him deranged; there was a straightforwardness and a terrible, though quiet, resolution to his manner that told of coherent purpose.

Whatever might be the provocation, the man was remorseless on the trail.

"I'm goin' clear through all the cars until I find the critter!" the miner added.

"You will not be allowed to do that."

"No?"

"No. It's the order to keep the cars quiet, and no one can enter any car but his own, and the smoker. That's to give sleep to all, and protect property."

"Wal, I s'pose I kin wait, though I hate ter," and Jockway's manner testified to his regret. "The feller must be one o' the passengers, an' he will be around ter-morrer, ef he don't skeer away."

Another man approached, walking through the darkness and slow drizzle of rain. It proved to be Abner Plunket.

"How's the night?" Saul asked.

"Darn the night!" answered the Haybottom gentleman, in disgust. "I wish I'd never left home!"

"You're having a pile of experience."

"I've lost that money. Now, what will the heathen in Afrikay do?"

"Same as the heathen in New England—do without."

"Pesky queer how I was robbed!"

Plunket shook his head soberly, and then turned to Buck Jockway.

"You set aside me!" he added.

"What of it?" Buck growled. "D'ye think I took yer cash?"

CHAPTER VI.

A STRANGE LETTER STRANGELY FOUND.

"LOOKS sort o' suspicious!" Plunket admitted.

Jockway's anger flamed up again, and his expression might have taught the Haybottom man caution if the darkness had not been in the way of a distinct view.

"You think I took yer durned old boodle!" repeated Buck, this time in a musing tone.

"I make no charges, fur I ain't got no proof."

"Eh?"

"I know enough o' law ter be cautious as ter what I say."

"But you think I took 'em?"

"I've got ter suspect somebody."

"Did ye see me hev yer money?"

"No."

"Or see me nigh yer pockets?"

"Wal, no."

"Yet, you charge me?"

"Somebody took it!" sulkily returned Plunket. Jockway laid his hand on the farmer's shoulder.

"Stranger, out at Lame Horse we never say what we can't prove. We aim ter do justice ter all men, an' be charitable ter all. With us, nobody's a thief unless we kin prove it, an' him who would accuse a feller-critter 'thout proof is a durned mean skunk. That's about your size, I reckon. Now, I'll show you how we use mean skunks!"

Swiftly shifting his grasp to Abner's collar, the miner proceeded to shake him as a dog might a rat. There was nothing playful about it; Buck Jockway was thoroughly angry, and

he put forth all his great strength to avenge the aspersion on his honor.

Poor Mr. Plunket was a passive actor in the athletic exercise. He was too badly frightened to resist, and, if it had been otherwise, his strength would have been of no avail in opposition to the brawny man from Lame Horse.

He was kept in the air much of the time, and his arms and legs flew about wildly; he made almost as many contortions as a jumping-jack.

Finally Buck bumped his victim up against the car.

"Got enough?" he demanded.

"Ye-ye-yes!" gasped Abner.

He was given another bump.

"Ef not, I'm still at hand!"

"Mercy! mercy!"

"Think I'm a thief?"

"No, no!"

Another bump.

"Want ter ruin my repertation?"

"No, no! Indeed, Mr. Jock—"

Another bump.

"Take it all back?"

"Yes, by gosh!"

"All right," quoth Jockway, growing good-humored at once. "I know a gentleman when I see one, an' that's what you be. I'd take ye in ter drink su'thin', but I'm dog-goned ef I know whar the stuff is kept in this saloon. Shake, Plunket! you're white!"

Very hearty and genial was Buck's voice, and Abner breathed a sigh of relief. His bones ached from his recent punishment, but he was willing to call it square rather than get another lesson.

As soon as he could do so conveniently, he beat a retreat.

"We've all got our crosses an' vexations," Buck observed. "I'm a bit put out by losin' my man, but I'm bound ter find him sooner or later. Then— Wal, I carry a shooter!"

"Why are you hunting that man?" Saul asked wonderingly.

"Eh?"

"Why do you hate him so?"

"Oh! it's all on account of that affair at Lame Horse— But you don't know about it. Never mind; it ain't necessary you should. I kin do my job, go back West, an' ask norgive no p'int. Understand?"

"No, I don't; but you may get into trouble, in your pursuit of vengeance."

"They can't git the drop on me!"

"The law may."

"What! fur killin' sech skunks?"

"The law protects every one, here East."

"Durn the East! I wouldn't live here, b' Judas! ef you'd give me a whole section o' land."

Nary! Look ye, young feller! that man I will kill, an' the gal, meek little mouse that she kin pretend ter be—wal, let her look out!"

Then Jockway slouched away toward his car.

"I'd hate to have him for my enemy!"

So thought Sunrise Saul as he watched the muscular miner until he disappeared in the darkness. The fall of rain increased from a drizzle to a brisk shower, and the newsboy sought cover.

He had reached the platform of a car which was the first behind the smoker, and the second behind Jockway's, when a man came out quickly. It was James Enonbridge.

The old gentleman's face brightened.

"Where's the conductor?" he asked.

"In the smoker, possibly; he's not sleeping, at all, but moving about, and keeping a general watch."

"Perhaps you will do. You can read?"

"Rather!"

"Then read this. My eyes are not as good as they were once, and I am not sure that I make it out correctly."

He extended a half-sheet of paper, and Saul read aloud the words written upon it:

"TO JAMES ENONBRIDGE:—"

"You are all adrift, and like a vessel moving toward the breakers of a strange coast. Look a little out! You will never be able to help your son, Ralph, until you get your eyes open and see things as they are. The worst danger lies not in the young man's arrest, but on this very train. There is more to the affair than you suspect, and you will do well to employ a skillful detective and let him sift the whole affair to the bottom. Unless you do this, the future of the Enonbridges looks rocky."

"EAGLE EYE."

When Saul finished reading, the old gentleman looked at him wonderingly.

"Is that what it says?"

"Yes, sir."

"That's what I made it out, but I don't understand it, at all."

"Where did this paper come from?"

"I found it pinned to the front of my coat."

"Pinned to your coat!"

"Yes. I had fallen asleep, but did not rest long; I am too old to sleep in the ordinary seat of a car. When I awoke, this paper touched my chin, and I found it as I have said."

"Was it done for a joke?"

"I don't think so."

"What, then?"

Mr. Enonbridge mechanically smoothed the paper with his wrinkled hands, and looked at vacancy in a way which aroused all of Saul's pity.

"I am on my way to a place near Boston, to see my son, who is in trouble. This document seems to connect with his case, and hints at trouble in a way which alarms me!"

"Have you any idea, sir, who wrote it?"

"No."

"If any one on the train knows about it, why don't he come right to you?"

"That I don't know."

"Who else is on the train that knows of your errand to Boston?"

"My granddaughter."

"She did not write it?"

"Bless me, no! It is not in Emmie's writing, and, if she had aught to say, she would speak right to the point."

"What are you going to do?"

"I want to find the writer."

"How can you do that?"

"I don't know."

Neither did Saul. Whoever had written the letter evidently preferred to remain unknown, and, as he had left the letter and made good his escape, there seemed no way of detecting him.

Saul saw that Enonbridge was not in a fit condition to pursue the investigation. He trembled with excitement and physical weakness, and, plainly, the best place for him was in the car. Poor as were the sleeping accommodations, it was better than to be wandering around in an aimless way to find an invisible person.

The news-agent set out to convince him of this, and succeeded so well that Enonbridge finally returned to his quarters.

"What next?" thought Saul. "Jockway declares that he has seen his enemy, and this old gentleman has a strange letter. Truly, there's a pile of romance carried on the railroad. It's always so—probably four persons out of every five whom we carry have either a hidden secret, a deep sorrow or a criminal design. Queer reading it would make if we had all their histories written up!"

Jim, the brakeman, approached.

"Any news?" he asked.

"No. Have you?" Saul answered.

"I should smile!"

"What is it?"

Jim held up his hands.

"See what I've got here in my grip?"

"An old-fashioned pocketbook, or 'wallet,' as I've heard my grandfather say."

"Exactly. Well, Saul, I found that by the car, totally empty, when I was amblin' along. Now, how come it there? Did the owner sling it away? Bet yer boots he didn't. That concern has a history!"

CHAPTER VII.

A TRAP TO CATCH A THIEF.

Jim's emphatic manner impressed Saul strongly.

"What is the history?" the latter asked.

"That's what we must find out," Jim responded.

"Then you know no more than that it was lying by the car?"

"That's all, but I can guess more."

"You think that the mysterious robber has been at work again, eh?"

"I do!"

So saying, Jim held up the pocketbook again.

"Empty to the last red!" he added. "Some old-fashioned feller has been gone through, his money appropriated by our slick-fingered thief, an' the useless wallet thrown away. Say, Saul, ef we ketch our man we have got ter hustle."

Saul was of the opinion that something more than "hustling" was needed. Since the unknown robber began to work the train, the company had put some of the very best of New York detectives on the trail. They had utterly failed to make any discovery, and it was an open secret that their employers regarded the robber—or robbers—as far shrewder than the detectives.

It was no small task to catch such criminals, and the youth was excusable for hesitating.

He would not admit a lack of confidence.

"Plainly," observed Sunrise Saul, "this pocketbook was emptied by the unknown train-robber."

"That's sure."

"Have you a plan, Jim?"

"Only to watch."

"Do you think we shall catch them?"

"I mean to. By the way, have you been in the smoker, lately?"

"About twenty minutes ago."

"Things are gettin' lively there. The card-players are whoopin' things up. Seems they had considerable whisky, an' they are soakin' it inter their hides. Maybe you noticed that the quiet gentlemen who played whist durin' the day are all asleep, and that the present players are black sheep."

"I did notice it."

"There's mischief in them."

"Think so?"

"I know it. Come an' see!"

Jim led the way back to the smoking-car, and Saul was not slow to see that affairs had changed for the worse. The card-players were a hard-looking lot, and their flushed faces showed that they were losing what grain of prudence they usually had. Saul knew that they had been drinking freely, and wondered where the supply of liquor had come from.

Liquor was there, and bottles were being passed around freely.

"This ought to be stopped," the youth observed.

"Who can do it?"

"The conductor."

Jim shook his head.

"He ain't got control over men who keep the peace. Them fellows ain't exactly drunk."

"They will be, soon, and dangerous. In cases like this the conductor ought to take authority, and stop the men before they lose all sense."

It was a difficult question to deal with, and so the trainmen found it. Due remonstrance was made to the hard drinkers, but without any good effect.

Serious fears began to be felt.

Would the men turn into rioters?

If they did they would make matters very unpleasant, and the "crew" was hardly strong enough in numbers to handle them. Probably the great majority of the passengers would be found on the side of law and order, if it came to a crisis, but they would not welcome an interruption to their rest.

There was no doubt as to where one man stood.

Buck Jockway did not rest. Back and forth along the track he wandered, looking for his enemy. The rule that every car except the smoker must be free from intrusion was enforced, and the Lame Horse miner could not search there, but he hoped to find the man outside.

So he went about, peering into the face of every one he met, ready to settle his grudge if opportunity was vouchsafed.

When he was addressed concerning the possibilities of a fight, his gloomy face lighted up with savage joy.

"Count me in!" he exclaimed. "Nobody can't say I'm a lawless man, but I am durned upset, now, an' a scrap will jest do me good. Ef thar is a row, let me know it. I kerry a six, an' the old gal has got a tooth in every socket. She kin bite!"

After that he kept near the smoking-car, anxious for the fight, but his patience was tried before he had any chance to work off his accumulated passion.

The riot was, perhaps, prevented by another sensation.

Sunrise Saul was standing by the car back of the "smoker" when something like a bat flapped down upon his head, and then dropped to the ground.

He looked up quickly, and just had a glimpse of a descending window.

He looked down, and saw an empty pocketbook at his feet.

This was a discovery which could not be passed over lightly. The mysterious train-robber was busy, and something must be done about it. Saul went at once to the conductor and told his story. That officer shook his head.

"The robber, again!"

"He seems to be working the whole train, and slinging the empty 'leathers' out by wholesale—as it may not all be done by the mysterious robber."

"It is!" declared the conductor; "it's just in his line. Since the trouble on our trains began, numerous empty pocket-books have been found by the side of the track by our laborers, and others, and every one has been recognized by some person robbed. This shows that it is the invariable habit of the robber to pocket the cash and throw out the 'leather.'"

"It's a wonder he isn't seen to do it."

"The robber is a dare-devil; all things go to prove that."

They went to the platform of the car to see who occupied the seat next to the window from which the pocket-book had been thrown, and saw a feeble old man and little old woman peacefully sleeping.

Obviously, the robber was not either of them.

"No flies on our robber, if he is a dare-devil," added the conductor. "He didn't give his own position away, and we are all in the dark. I'd like to nab that fellow! I regard it as not only a challenge, so to speak, when he threw out the 'leather,' but an intimation that we were blamed fools. I'll catch him if I can."

"How? By alarming the car?"

"Not by any means. If the robber has stowed away a whole fistful of bank-notes, it would be hard to prove that they were not his. Not one person in a hundred takes the numbers of bills which he carries. No; our one way is to 'lay for' our man, and take him on the sly."

"How?"

"Pipe the car."

"I see."

"Boy, you look pretty fly."

"Do I?"

"Yes; and I think I'll give you the job."

"Just as you say."

"I will send Jim in to change the ventilators on the north side of the car, and, while he is thus occupied, you can slide in and lie down on the floor. This done, you are to keep still as possible there, and not let any one suspect that there has been an addition to the happy family."

This did not meet Saul's approval, as it would restrict his freedom of movements for the rest of the night, and the conversation ended in a brakeman having the chance, instead.

The watcher was soon introduced into the car, according to the programme, but Saul was not by any means sure that the robber would consent to be caught.

Anxious to solve this question, he planted himself on one of the brakes and, keeping well back so that the darkness, the fog and his position combined to make himself invisible, added his gaze to the vigil kept.

In the smoking-car the card-playing grew feeble. Some of the drunkards went to sleep, while the others grew less noisy.

It looked less like a riot.

An hour elapsed.

In the marked car all had been quiet, and Saul nearly went to sleep on the brake-wheel. He was sitting with closed eyes, and his thoughts had wandered, but he finally awoke with a start and the knowledge that he had nearly fallen off the wheel.

He glanced into the car again.

Some one was moving.

The lamps had been turned down quite low, but he could distinctly see a moving figure. It was that of a man, and was crossing the car.

This did not necessarily prove anything, for he might be the most honest of men.

But Saul soon had cause for suspicion. The unknown did not walk boldly; his progress was slow and furtive, and he looked sharply at the sleeping passengers in the seats as he went.

"Mischief afoot, I do believe!"

Muttering these words, Saul leaned forward and watched eagerly. Was the solution of the mysterious robbery-case at hand?

The prowler appeared to be uncertain; once, he stopped entirely, and looked around, but finally moved on.

At last he paused, crouched down and seemed to fumble in one of the seats—possibly, over one of the sleeping passengers.

Then Saul saw the brakeman spy arise, take a few steps forward and reach the prowler. Another moment and the latter was seized in the railroad man's firm hold and thrown to the floor.

CHAPTER VIII.

NABBED AT NIGHT.

"I've got him!—I've got the robber! Come an' git him!"

This cry sounded in an excited way from the brakeman's lips, and Sunrise Saul waited for no more. Springing to the door, he flung it open and opened the car. There had been a struggle, but it hardly deserved that name. The prisoner had not shown remarkable strength, and, being taken at a disadvantage, had been overpowered without much trouble.

He was now lying under the railroad man's knee, while the passengers, startled by the outcry, were springing up all around.

"Turn up the lights!" added the brakeman, in a voice like a small hurricane.

Saul hastened to obey this order.

"Ketched him right in the act, jest as he was pocking a picket—I mean, picking a pocket. Guess that means the offered reward fur me, an' promotion ter a conductor's berth. Well, I should smile!"

"You darned fool, let me go!" cried the prisoner, vigorously.

"Why, it's Abner Plunket!" exclaimed Saul.

Sure enough, the man under the brakeman's knee was the gentleman from Haybottom.

"Ketched him in the act," repeated the brakeman. "Jest look at him! Ever see a more ruffianly face?"

"Oh! oh!" groaned Abner.

"Looks jest like a murderer!"

"Say, dew you know who I be?"

"Some cut-throat."

"I'm a deacon o' the Haybottom church!"

"Deacon o' nothin'!"

"I'm Mr. Plunket, an' I sell cabbages ter two members o' the Legislature."

"You're a pickpocket an' sneak-thief—that's what you be!"

"Me? Say, gosh-all-hemlocks! you say that ag'in an' I'll punch ye! I'm a deacon, but I kin lick two of you with any kind o' a show. Me a thief? Say, let me up, an' I will thrash you like Cain, by sixty!"

Mr. Plunket was in a state of great indignation, and he tried to carry out his threats, but was obliged to yield to superior strength. The passengers were crowding forward, anxious to know the cause of the disturbance.

"He's a sneak-thief," the captor repeated.

"John, I think there is a mistake," urged Saul.

"How so?"

"I don't believe this man is a thief."

"Ketched him at it!"

"But perhaps he can explain—"

"He can't. Ketched him in the act," John stubbornly reiterated. "There's the man he tried ter rob, now," and he pointed to Mr. Enonbridge.

"No, I didn't!" Plunket declared; "but that air is the seat I had afore the smash-up, an' I was a-lookin' for my pocket-knife. I've lost it."

"Gammon!"

"Hey?"

"No lies go down here."

"Why, darn you! I'm a deacon o' the Haybottom church, an' I wouldn't lie, nohow."

"Take him off!" interposed a passenger.

"He's guilty, of course."

A lady moved quickly, but quietly forward. It was Emmie Enonbridge.

"I do not agree with you!" she declared.

"Eh?" questioned John, the brakeman.

"I do not think Mr. Plunket guilty."

"Why not?"

"We talked with him during the day, and I think him an honest man."

"But I ketched him in the act!"

"What proof have you that his explanation was untrue?"

"Untrue! Why, it was as thin as church lemonade. 'Twouldn't deceive nobody but a numbskull ov a woman!"

In the excitement of the moment the brakeman forgot the politeness required of his class, and his manner was as rude as were his words. He was soon shown that he had made a mistake.

Emmie confronted him with flashing eyes.

"Take that back!" she commanded.

"What?"

"Whatever may be my mental deficiencies, I do not allow any one to class numbskulls and women together in my hearing. Apologize!"

The little woman stamped her pretty foot upon the floor, and her eyes glittered more than ever. James Enonbridge was dumfounded, while the other passengers looked on in admiration. Half the men were eager to become her champions, but it occurred to all that Emmie was quite capable of fighting her own battle.

As for the brakeman, he was speechless at first, but his wits soon returned. He flushed deeply.

"Miss," he humbly said, "I beg yer pardon. I didn't mean half so bad as I seemed ter, and what I did say was the result of being flustered. It's a mean man that will be rude to a lady, and I hope you can find it possible ter excuse me."

"Sir, pray don't say any more," Emmie answered graciously. "I know you meant no harm, and I apologize for my temper!"

Some one proposed a cheer for Miss Enonbridge, and it was given with a will.

Just then the conductor made his appearance and asked for an explanation. It was soon given, and Abner Plunket again became the

center of attraction. He realized that he was under a serious charge, and was a good deal broken up, but he found an eloquent defender.

Emmie was as emphatic in asserting his innocence as before. He was closely questioned; he told a straightforward story; and persisted in the statement that he had been merely looking for his pocket-knife. Mr. Enonbridge spoke in his favor, believing him to be just what he seemed—a very green old farmer—and the conductor was at a loss what to do.

Sunrise Saul came to the front with a suggestion.

Why not look for the pocket-knife?

This was done, and, under the seat where the Enonbridges had lately been, a knife was found which Abner claimed as his.

Nearly all regarded this as good proof and called for Plunket's release. The conductor saw that it might be the artifice of a cunning mind—if guilty, Abner or a confederate might have placed it there as a shield from possible trouble—but he finally decided that there was no actual evidence upon which the prisoner could be held.

Accordingly, he was released.

The train-robber remained to be caught.

Saul was greatly disappointed by all this, for he felt sure that the real robber, whoever it might be, would remain quiet thereafter during the night, but other developments followed.

Two passengers suddenly discovered that they had been robbed, and, when the pocket-books found outside the car were produced, the men readily identified them.

Two new, genuine robberies were added to the long list the road had rolled up in the past year.

And, as usual, there was no clew to the perpetrator of the thefts.

The conductor talked with the losers, who, at first, demanded a search of the other passengers, but a consideration of the facts led to the withdrawal of the demand. Neither of the victims could identify any of the lost money, and it was, plainly, a hopeless undertaking. The thief had rid himself of the pocketbooks, and it was not likely that he had retained any incriminating evidence.

"He's cunning as they make them!" the conductor asserted. "As soon as he commits a robbery he gets rid of the pocketbook, and then he is safe. Bank-notes cannot be identified unless their numbers are known."

The latest losers acquiesced, and dropped the matter.

Abner Plunket felt himself awkwardly placed and insisted upon being searched. Upon him was found a sum of money which, he stated, had been selected after careful figuring by his wife and himself as just what he would need on his trip to Boston.

It was small, and nobody claimed it.

Plunket was generally considered an honest man.

All this being done, the conversation ended and the passengers settled down to finish their interrupted sleep. Saul rejoined his friend, Jim.

"You kin use my head for a foot-ball!" observed the brakeman, with a deep sigh. "We either ain't smart or we ain't lucky. The robber is both."

"That he is."

"He won't never be ketched."

"Don't know about that; he may."

"Kin you do it?"

Saul shook his head.

"I am not a detective."

"Turn ter be one. Nab that man, an' the company will do anything in the world for you."

These words haunted Saul. He had an aged mother and younger brother to support, and he was doing it cheerfully. His ambition, however, had been to get a more complete education than could possibly be obtained while the family resources were so small.

If he could detect the robber, the offered reward would enable him to satisfy his ambition.

It was a pleasant thing to think about, but he was not sanguine. The robber was cunning; good detectives had already failed either to catch him or to suspect his identity; and it seemed out of the question for Saul to accomplish it.

He studied on the point, however, until he fell asleep, sitting on the platform of a car.

When he awoke it was daylight, and there was a new matter of interest. Workmen had arrived to repair the track, and they were likely to get out of their prison before many hours.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MAN IN IMPRISONMENT.

WHEN the damage to the track had been repaired sufficiently, the train resumed its way. The locomotive was found not to be seriously injured, and when the veteran engineer found himself once more at his post, he forgot his own bruises in the pleasure of finding his iron steed fit for work.

As the train neared Boston, Sunrise Saul was approached by Mr. James Enonbridge.

"Do you go right back, my lad?" asked the old gentleman.

"Not to-day. I am too late for my usual trip, so I shall stay over here until to-morrow."

"Shall you be busy?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know Boston and vicinity well?"

"Fairly so, sir."

"Can I engage you to act as my guide?"

"What do you want to do?"

"I may as well be frank. My son is under arrest in a city just outside of Boston, and I am going to see him, encourage him, and help him all I can. My granddaughter is with me, but neither she nor I can claim acquaintance with this part of the country. Since my son located here he has come to see me often, but my age and feeble condition have prevented me from going to him."

"I see, sir."

"My granddaughter—her name is Emmie—knows but little about any part of the East. She was born and reared in the West, and only came to this part of the country a short time ago. She came just in time," the old gentleman added, musingly. "My daughter, aunt to Emmie, with whom I had lived, had just died, and I was thinking of breaking up my home. Emmie came like a ray of sunshine, and is the staff upon which I lean in this hour of adversity. But this is not to the point."

Arousing, Enonbridge proceeded more practically:

"As neither of us knows anything about Boston or vicinity, I desire a guide."

"I think I can go with you."

"I cannot pay you much."

"Never mind the pay, sir."

Saul spoke heartily, and looked with friendly interest and respect at the kind old face before him.

"My time isn't worth much, and I'll go for nothing, sir," he added.

"But I can't ask that—"

"Never mind; we'll settle it later. May I ask what your son is under arrest for?"

"Poor Ralph! Why, the boy is charged with embezzlement. He worked for a business house and was its confidential manager. Money became missing, and there was what seemed to be positive proof against him. It is this which shows me that there was a deep plot."

"How so?"

"If it were only a matter of suspicion, then, to those who did not know my son, I suppose he would be thought of first. But he tells me that there was an abundance of direct evidence, all of which pointed to him. Do you see what I mean?"

"Not exactly."

"No guilty person would leave evidence to convict him, which shows that there was a plot."

Saul was silent.

"The real criminal put the evidence there to throw suspicion upon Ralph."

"Well, I hope you'll be able to prove it, sir."

Saul spoke heartily, but he hardly shared Enonbridge's confidence. He did not know the particulars, and Ralph might prove to be a model young man, but it was a fact that the friends of an accused man never do believe him guilty. The old gentleman's opinion was an honor to his heart, though it might not be so to his head.

They arrived at Boston while still talking, and Enonbridge then had Saul accompany him to where Emmie awaited his return.

"My dear," said he, "I have engaged an ally."

Emmie looked her surprise.

"An ally?"

"Yes; this youth."

"I don't comprehend."

"Knowing the inconvenience we must suffer, as strangers hereabouts, I have secured the services of a competent guide—this boy."

Saul saw a shade of annoyance cross Emmie's face.

"Out to Somerville?" she questioned.

"Yes; and as long as we remain."

"I do not see the need of it."

"But we are strangers."

"We have the power of making inquiries."
 "True; but we should waste time in trying to get around alone."

"Just as you say; you know best. Well, I trust that our guide will prove a veritable Kit Carson," and the young lady smiled brightly upon Saul.

Mr. Enonbridge was fit for nothing but a comfortable bed, but he would listen to no arguments which would lead to unnecessary separation from his unfortunate son. He was determined to go ahead, and go they did.

By Saul's advice they took a street-car to Causeway street—the travelers had no money to pay carriage-hire—and then took the Fitchburg Railroad for Union Square station, in Somerville. The young guide knew that prisoners were often taken at once to the East Cambridge jail, but he gave heed to Enonbridge's assertion that Ralph was still in Somerville, and led the way to the Bow street police-station.

This building was not the most imposing or grim of the law's strongholds, but neither this fact nor the close proximity of the church on Summer street, saved Enonbridge from a fit of trembling as he beheld its walls.

They entered.

A little conversation developed the fact that Ralph was there, and his father and Emmie were allowed to see him without delay.

Their coming was no surprise to him, and he advanced eagerly to meet them. Poor old Mr. Enonbridge, weak and trembling, folded him in his arms.

"My boy!—my poor boy!" he murmured, in a shaking voice.

"Not poor, while I have your love and confidence in my hour of trouble!" declared Ralph, his own voice far from steady.

"I know you are innocent!"

"I am; I swear it!"

"But you are in imprisonment."

"I have failed to get bail."

"How much is asked?"

"Five thousand dollars."

"Just Heaven!"

To one of Mr. Enonbridge's means, the sum was as much a barrier as though it had been ten times as much.

"Have no fear—justice and right will triumph!" the prisoner declared.

"They must; they must. And they will! But, come, Ralph, here is your niece, Emmie. Take your first look at her!"

He stepped back, and the younger persons greeted each other affectionately. Owing to the fact that Emmie had been reared in the West, they never had met before.

"Pretty as a peach!" asserted Ralph, assuming an air of lightness, "but I don't see much resemblance to our line of Enonbridges."

Emmie's mother had been James Enonbridge's sister, and she had married a distant relative of the same name. Hence, their daughter was doubly an Enonbridge.

A long consultation took place, and the chances were discussed, and means of relief considered. Ralph, who, instead of being a boy, as his father called him, was a man of twenty-eight years, had a wife and two sons, but the former was an invalid, and the latter were, of course, too young to be more than an expense at this crisis.

And Ralph had money neither for luxuries nor for necessities.

He was a man of remarkably pleasing appearance. His features were not exactly regular, but they were bold, manly and strong; and he gave every evidence of being an earnest, intelligent person.

After a long interview, the visitors returned to where Sunrise Saul awaited them.

James Enonbridge's face was downcast.

"We will all go to Ralph's house," he remarked.

"Do you need the boy longer?" asked Emmie.

"Saul? Yes; he's to remain right with us until we reach some conclusion."

"Uncle Ralph's wife may not have room for him."

"It don't take but one chair more."

Mr. Enonbridge showed a trace of resentment, and Emmie hastened to reply:

"I was thinking of to-night. By all means, let us have him along. I am not sure but he's more fit to lead our forces than either of us."

She smiled in her peculiarly pleasant way upon the youth, who good-naturedly answered:

"I am no general, but you may command me while I am at your service."

Ralph's home was on Quincy street, and to that place Saul led the way. By the time he had been in the house half an hour, he was a

zealous supporter of the Enonbridge cause. Ralph's wife was a woman who just suited Saul, and the young boys, James and Ralph, junior, were handsome and polite.

It was a fine family, and Saul became anxious to help them all he could.

"I will tell the story," said Ralph's wife, "and show you that there is something wrong. My husband is no thief, and I say that there is a plot against him. I only wish I knew the plotter!"

CHAPTER X.

JOCKWAY'S REMARKABLE REVELATION.

THE account of the embezzlement charged against Ralph Enonbridge need not be given here in detail. He had held a position of trust, which included the keeping of one set of account-books. When the crash came it was found that these books had been juggled with, certain recent entries showing clumsy changes as to figures.

Cash was also missing. It was the claim of the defense that this had been taken by burglars, but there was nothing to show that burglars had been in the store. The prosecution claimed that Ralph had deliberately taken the money, before the hour of closing, and supported their assertion with the fact that an envelope which bore Ralph's name had been found near the money-drawer, the next day, with ten one-dollar bills in it.

It seemed to have been left by the thief, by accident.

As Ralph closed the store, and the proprietor opened it mornings, and each had a key, and no one else did have one, it looked bad for Ralph.

Mrs. Enonbridge maintained that there was a conspiracy.

The envelope with the money in it was, in her sight, one item of evidence; the clumsy tampering with the books was another; and there were other slight points which do not require prolonged attention.

"But Ralph is the victim of a deliberate plot!" declared Mrs. Enonbridge, stoutly.

"What sort of a man is his employer?" asked Saul, thoughtfully.

"An upright, just man."

"Who else in the store could have done it?"

"Nobody, for there were only two keys, as I have before said."

"Did Ralph ever give his key to any one?"

"No."

"You live alone in this house, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Any one ever appear curious about the key?"

"No."

"What theory are you working upon?" inquired Mr. Enonbridge.

"I'll show you presently," Saul replied, and then continued his questions. "Do you often have company over night?"

"No; I may say that we never do. During the last year we have had company over night but once."

"Who were here then?"

"Two gentlemen from the West, friends of Miss Emmie."

"Mr. Hardy and his friend," added Emmie.

"Did you know them in the West?"

"I knew Mr. Hardy. His friend, Mr. Brown, I met but once. Both lived in Denver."

"What sort of men were they?"

"The very best. They were members of leading families, and quiet, unassuming men. Didn't you think so, aunt?"

"Yes," Ralph's wife readily replied.

"That settles that," decided Mr. Enonbridge.

"I don't know whether it does or not," quietly returned Saul. "We have got to proceed on some certain line, and to investigate some one; or else admit that Ralph is guilty. As we don't want to do this, let us look more closely to Hardy and Brown. I presume, Mrs. Enonbridge, that they had the freedom of your house while here?"

"Yes."

"And it is possible that they could get at Ralph's keys?"

"Yes, but—"

"This is a waste of time!" remonstrated Emmie. "Mr. Hardy is above suspicion, and I feel sure it is the same with his friend. Let us not throw any chance away by thinking of this trivial matter."

"Well, it's your affair, not mine," Saul remarked.

"Poor Ralph!" sighed Enonbridge.

"You are right, Saul," quickly observed Emmie, "no chance should be neglected. I am

afraid I have not a good business head. Proceed with your questions, by all means."

"How long ago were Hardy and Brown here?"

"About two months."

"You say there were small sums missing from the money-drawer before the crash came. When did these losses begin?"

"Five weeks ago."

"Where are Hardy and Brown now?"

"They left for Europe at once."

"Are you sure?"

"They said they were going, and we have had no reason to doubt the statement," Mrs. Enonbridge returned.

Saul was silent. Men who were in Europe could not very well enter a business place in Somerville, and rifle the money-drawer. Appearances indicated that he was on the wrong track. Emmie vouched for Hardy. It seemed absurd to suspect the men.

"If we abandon that line of reasoning, what can we give our attention to?" he asked.

It was a question easier asked than answered. Ever since Ralph's arrest he and his wife had been puzzling themselves over the inquiry: Who could have executed the plot against him?

They had found no answer in the past, and none was found now. Conversation went on for an hour, but it was all to no purpose. The fact remained that Ralph was in the worst kind of a fix, but no light was shed upon the case.

Of course Mr. Enonbridge and Emmie were to stay where they were, but Saul declined an invitation to do the same. It was necessary for him to go to his own home, which was in Boston. At Mr. Enonbridge's earnest request, however, he promised to get a substitute to go on the train the next day, and return to his new friends.

He then left the house, walked down Somerville avenue, through Union Square, and down Webster avenue to the Fitchburg Station. He was just in time to catch a train, and soon had a seat.

After the start was made some one slouched along and sat down beside him.

"Hullo, younker! that you?" growled a deep voice.

Saul looked up in surprise and saw Buck Jockway.

"So you're here?"

"Young feller, I be," the miner agreed.

"I didn't know that you had business out here."

"Hum! Wal, you kin see I did. The first thing I did when I reached Boston was ter put Ab Plunket on his feet. That critter is a limp rag, but 'tain't Montana style ter see even a dog go ter pieces fur want o' due bracin' o' the backbone. Plunk had but a speck o' money, so, b' Judas! I put aside my disgust fur him, an' cashed over enough to kerry him through."

"You are generous."

"No, I ain't; I didn't do it with good grace, but jest 'cause he's down. I deserve no credit."

"Did he ask you for the money?"

"No. Say, d'ye s'pose I'd wait ter be asked when I seen a feller-critter in need?"

"I consider you deserving of credit, but we won't argue the point. So you've been to Somerville?"

Eccentric Jockway paused to grate his strong teeth before he replied.

"D'ye remember what I tol' ye on the train, boy?"

"About your visit East?"

"Yes."

"You said you were here to be avenged upon some man."

"Yes, b' Judas! that's it; and that's what I'm a-drivin' at now. I heerd that my man was livin' on Prospect street, an' thar I went, but I got more news than man. Hardy has moved from Prospect street ter Salem street, Boston."

"Who has moved?" cried Saul.

"My man."

"What's his name?"

"Arad Boyne."

"That wasn't what you called him."

"Oh! he seemed ter hev dropped that name when he came East—nobody knows his reel name, I reckon. Sence he come hyar he's called hisself Hardy, I've found out."

"From the West?"

"From Denver."

Saul's composure was somewhat shaken. The Hardy concerning whom he had been talking with the Enonbridges had also been from Denver. Were the two one and the same person? If so, it did not appear that he had been to Europe.

"When B. yne came East," continued Jock-

way, "one o' his friends—a scoundrel o' the same dye, but a man I have no interest in—come along, too. I don't know what raffle they expected ter make, but you kin be sure thar was deviltry afoot. It war some time afore I learned whar they was, but, when I did, I jest packed my grip an' jumped this way like a jack-rabbit."

"Who was Boyne's friend?"

"Piper, his name was, but he changed that when he settled hyar, an' called himself Brown!"

"Hardy an' Brown?"

"Them was the names."

And so, too, they were the names given by the irreproachable gentleman from Denver who called upon Ralph Enonbridge two months before.

Saul, too, was ready to believe that there was a deep plot in the embezzlement case. In the first place, Emmie had been greatly deceived, somehow, in regard to the men. Saul was not slow to form a theory as to how this had happened.

No doubt, he thought, Boyne and Piper had known of her acquaintance with a genuine Hardy and Brown, and had cunningly used their names to get into Ralph's house and Ralph's good graces.

Certainly, it would not do to ignore the men, if Buck Jockway was sure of all he alleged.

The train rolled into the Causeway street depot, but Saul was not ready to leave the miner from Lame Horse. He had more questions to ask.

CHAPTER XI.

HUNTING DANGEROUS GAME.

"MR. JOCKWAY, I want to talk with you further," observed Saul, as they left the train.

"All right. I'm told that Hardy ain't likely ter be in afore eight o'clock, an' it's only half-past six, I see."

The miner glanced up at the big depot clock as he spoke.

"Le's go ter a saloon an' set down," he added.

"Thank you, but I am not stuck on saloons. With your permission we'll sit down in the waiting-room."

"Jest as you say. You go in, an' I'll soon join yer, but I must hev a gallon o' benzine ter wash my mouth with, first. It's Western style."

The last words were put in apologetically. Buck went out, but soon returned. He liked Saul, and was glad to remain in his company.

"Wal, Sunrise, what is it?" he asked.

"I want to talk about Boyne *alias* Hardy."

"Blaze away!"

"Tell me why you hate him."

Jockway's face grew dark and frowning.

"B'Judas! I will, old hoss!" he agreed. "It's a tough story, an' I'll make it short. Might run 'er up ter an evenin's lay-out, but 'twon't pay. Sa-ay, hev you got a bed-rock friend?"

"I have a mother and a brother."

"How'd you feel ef they was done up? But ye can't reckon on it; 'tain't a grain o' use ter try. Jest you listen ter me."

"Sunrise, I'm a rough burr, but I've got tender an' meller spots in my gizzard. Nobody ever got right up an' gripped the better half o' my heart—not sence I war a kid—as Sammy Dean did. I seen him fu'st when I went ter Lame Horse, fur he had the claim next ter mine. But them two claims was whacked up as one soon after, fur me an' Sammy got ter be pards o' the truest sort."

"He wa'n't a grizzled old pine-knot like me, but a young man wi' a fine form, han'some face, black eyes, an' the dandiest black, curly h'ar you ever seen. He was a good 'un, Sammy was, an' I come ter like him as David o' the Bible did Solomon—or was it Jonathan?"

The man from Lame Horse paused for a moment to consider this point, and then resumed:

"Let me git over it quickly. Me an' Sammy struck it rich, an' we decided ter put out all our savin's in machinery, an' other things, necessary ter work our claim on A1 principles, so off I set fur Denver ter fix things."

"I was there two weeks, an' had jest got all 'rangements made when I was took down with fever. Sunrise, I had the most durned close call ye ever heern on; it was two weeks afore I had my senses, an' four when I got muskle enough ter go back ter Lame Horse."

"What d'ye guess I found?"

There was a tremor in the big miner's voice as he asked the question, and tears actually glistened in his eyes. This mood soon passed, and the old, vengeful gleam appeared in his glance.

"Pard, when I got thar Sammy Dean was

dead! An' this is the story: Right after I left Lame Horse a gal came ter the camp—Rosebud, she war called. Sammy, it seems, had met her casually afore, but when she showed up at Lame Horse she jest settled down on him like a burr.

"Ter look at, she war as pooty an' mild as could be found in womankind, an' poor Sammy soon thought her an angel. Yes, b'Judas! she bewitched him, made him b'lieve she loved him, an' he fell head over heels in love with her."

"Poor Sammy! it war his death-blow."

"One mornin' 'twas found that Sammy lay dyin' in our but with a lump o' lead in him. He had jest life enough ter tell the truth."

"The gal was not the meek, nice little mouse she seemed, but she had wormed out o' him the secret o' whar all our money was buried, an' then a pal o' hern stepped in an' shot Sammy. Sam tumbled ter the game afore the drop was onter him, an' pulled his gun, but the gal held him so he couldn't use it, an' then her pal dropped my pard."

"While he lay there bleedin' his life away, the pair dug up the money—Sam's money an' mine—an' the tiger-cat mocked at him, an' derided him, an' called him a weak-minded fool!"

Buck Jockway paused. The blood rushed to his face until its hue was a red almost purple, and he brushed away the perspiration which profound emotion had called to his face.

After another delay he resumed:

"Lemme tell it quick. When I got home Sammy was dead an' buried; our partnership money was gone; an' gone was the she-fiend an' her pal. Kin you guess what I did?"

"I'll tell what I did; I swore revenge. Nobody knew whar the pair had gone, an' all I could learn about the woman was that she war a notorious gambler, confidence-woman, thief an' criminal in gen'ral. 'A demon in human form; a woman without mercy,' is what the sheriff at Leadville tol' me she was."

"Her pard was better known; I'd seen him at Lame Horse, myself, afore I went away. Prob'ly he was workin' the case up. This man was Arad Boyne, *alias* Hardy."

"Wal, you don't keer ter know how I worked detective-like on the case fur a whole year. But I found out, at last, that him an' the woman had come East. He, so I was told, was livin' in Somerville as Mr. Hardy. She I ain't heerd from, an' ef I was ter see her, I wouldn't know her, 'cause I ain't never seen her; but I hev a feelin' that she's at the house on Salem street, an' that I shall see her ter-night!"

"And then?"

Saul asked the question, speaking for the first time in several minutes. There had been a good deal of dramatic force to Buck Jockway's story, and it had impressed him strongly.

"Then," answered the miner, in a deep voice, "let the two on 'em bewar' o' me!"

"Does Boyne know you are here?"

"Don't know."

"You think you saw him on the train?"

"I know I did!"

"And he peered into your face?"

"Mebbe it was chance, but I suspek he does know I'm hyar, an' that's why he skipped from Somerville ter Boston."

"You're going to seek him to-night?"

"I be!"

"So am I!"

"You?"

"Yes."

"B'Judas! what fur?"

"I think that I want Hardy, too. Crime flows in channels, and a piece of work out in Somerville seems to point to your enemy as the guilty man."

"You don't say so. What's the case?"

"You remember James Enonbridge?"

"I do that, an' a fine man he is."

Jockway spoke with hearty interest, and Saul proceeded to tell the story of Ralph's trouble. When he spoke about the Mr. Hardy, from Denver, who had visited the Somerville Enonbridges, Saul's speech grew hesitating, but Buck came in promptly.

"Same man?" he declared.

"Are you sure?"

"No doubt of it. I was told that he had some game here afore I left the West."

"Why should he come all this distance to prey upon Ralph Enonbridge, a man too poor to yield any income for sharpers?"

"Has he ever been West?"

"No."

"Then you've got me, but he's the man; it's the same critter. I know it!"

"Well, Buck, I am going with you to see Hardy."

The miner's face became troubled

"D'ye know what that means?"

"You may tell me."

"We're goin' among men who are on the shoot—yes, an' among women o' the same sort, ef Hardy's female pal is with him, an' I don't doubt that she is. It will be a tough crowd, an' they will know at the start that I'm thar ter avenge Sammy Dean! What'll be the result? Why, they'll empty ev'ry gun they kerry in the laudable intention o' fillin' me up a-chock with lead. Reckon you don't want ter be thar. Hey?"

"Yes, I do."

"B'Judas! you don't mean it!"

"Mr. Jockway, I have set out to give the Enonbridges a lift, and I want to do it. You and I must capture Hardy and take him to Somerville for identification."

"Alive?"

"Certainly."

"But I was a-goin' ter do him up fur keeps," the miner answered, doubtfully.

"You must give up your idea. In the first place, human life is held sacred here, as far as man to man is concerned, be the menaced person ever so bad, and I would not consent to be the partner of one bent on taking the law into his own hands. In the next place, we must save the Enonbridges before you settle your own score."

Jockway sighed deeply.

"I s'pose I kin put it off a bit," he responded, reluctantly.

"Do it, pard, and you won't be the loser in the long run."

"All right. Wal, le's hev supper, an' then amble down ter Salem street an' buckle on ter Arad Boyne."

They went to a restaurant on Causeway street and ate what was necessary. Then, after Buck had looked to his huge revolver, they set out to hunt for the suspected man.

Sunrise Saul was not going into danger blindly. He believed that Hardy was a desperate man, but the risk was taken with the coolness of a brave character.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MINER FINDS HIS FOES.

"THIS is the house!"

Saul Maynard made this announcement as they paused in front of a brick house on Salem street, and the miner from Lame Horse promptly added:

"That's the number, sure."

"Shall we go in?"

"Sartain!"

Buck rung the bell.

The house was not one to impress a beholder favorably. Appearances indicated that it was one of the oldest on that ancient street of the North End, and the hand of care had never touched up its barren places. It was rusty with age, and had a seedy, run-down appearance.

There was but little delay before the door was opened. A boy of about ten years made his appearance and looked at them sleepily.

"Hardy in?" questioned Jockway.

"Dunno. Come in an' see!"

The boy did not appear to have much interest in life, anyway, but he made an open road for them, and they entered.

"Lives on secon' floor. Come up!"

Having closed the door, the boy of few words shuffled up the stairs as though his legs were weighted down. They followed without hesitation. The house, seedy as it was, did not look bad inside, and the boy appeared too stupid to be evil. He led the way to a door on the second floor.

"Rap!" he sleepily directed, and then shuffled away.

Jockway rapped.

"Come in!" directed a feminine voice.

They entered.

Before them was a room of medium size, comfortably but cheaply furnished. In a rocking-chair sat a handsome woman of about twenty-five years. There was no sign of any want. She looked up brightly; then appeared to grow doubtful.

"Oh! I thought it was some of the folks," she explained, in a liquid, melodious voice.

"Marm," answered Buck, coming to the point at once, "is Hardy in?"

"No, sir; but he will return shortly. Pray be seated, and wait for him."

The callers sat down.

"So Hardy lives here?" muttered Jockway.

"He boards with us."

"Be you the keeper o' the hash-house?"

"I reckon not; I board here, too."

"Hum!"

Buck let his breath escape in a long-drawn fashion which was half sigh and half exclamation.

tion. He looked at the woman curiously, impressed with a sudden idea. She was small, bright and pretty, and her manners were refined and pleasant.

According to all reports this had been exactly the case with the woman known as "Rosebud," who had deceived Sammy Dean, lured him on to his ruin, and taken part in the murder. Buck Jockway had expected to find Rosebud at the Salem street house, and he was not surprised to find some one who looked like her.

Was it the same woman?

The miner's blood began to grow hot.

Was this woman she who had ruined Sammy?

"Friend o' Hardy's?" he asked.

The little woman smiled sweetly upon him.

"I am," she admitted.

"You ain't a Boston woman, I take it?"

"I'm from the West!"

Jockway's eyes glittered. He felt sure of his prey, at last. Wherever Hardy might be, Rosebud, he was willing to bet high, was before him. Something seemed to affect his organs of respiration, and Sunrise Saul actually could hear him breathe.

It was not hard to perceive what a great effort he was making to control his feelings.

"We're all from the West!"

A light, careless voice broke in with the remark, and Buck wheeled partly around. Forward to the center of the room came another man. He had taken heed of the weather and was lightly clothed in a blue-and-white striped suit. He was smoking a cigar, and, on the whole, seemed to have no higher concern in life than to keep comfortable, but his appearance made Buck glare all the more.

"Arad Boyne!" he exclaimed.

"Jockway, old chappie, how are you?" inquired Boyne, languidly, as he blew out a wreath of smoke.

"We meet ag'in!" observed Buck, in a rumbling voice.

"No doubt of it. Your nibsy is a long way from Lame Horse."

"D'ye know why I'm hyar?"

"No."

"I'm arter you!"

"Me?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Ter kill ye!"

Buck Jockway forgot all except his deep hatred, and the words were hissed with the venom of an angry serpent.

Outwardly, Boyne remained unmoved.

"Go away, cully!" he directed, playfully.

"Do ye doubt it?"

"Yes. Why should you kill me?"

"D'ye remember I was Sammy Dean's pard?"

"I remember."

"An' that you stole almost my last cent, an' killed my pard?"

"Oh! come, now, Bucky, don't go on so!" directed Boyne, in mild reproof. "Why should you harp on a trifle like that? Let bygones be bygones!"

"You scoundrel!" cried Jockway, in a loud voice "d'ye know what I've sworn ter do?"

"No."

"Kill you!"

Hardy smiled blandly as these words were vehemently flung at him.

"Is that all? You surprise me. Now for my surprise!"

He whistled softly, and a double click at the further side of the room caused Jockway to spring to his feet. There stood two ill-looking roughs, with extended revolvers in their hands, the hammers being raised.

"Look this way, old man!"

Buck looked—Hardy and the woman had each drawn a revolver, so that four ready weapons were bearing upon the man from Lame Horse.

"Trapped! Ketch on?" Hardy laughed.

The miner was silent, but Sunrise Saul realized that his interest in the case had led him into a most perilous situation. It was war to the death between the gang and Buck, and, as Buck's partner he would not be allowed to go away and tell any damaging story if there was any to tell.

As Jockway continued silent, Hardy laughed aloud.

"Got the drop on you, you see?"

"I see."

"Planned it so; this was a trap."

"Hum!"

"I saw you on the train, but you couldn't find me after the first blush. Reason: I had a disguise at hand. Suspecting your object, I laid this trap. You were sent here from Somerville because I could better trap you here. See?"

Sunrise Saul, for one, had no trouble in "seeing." Everything went to show that Hardy told the truth, and it was clear that they had been lured into the man's power. What was to be the next act Saul did not know, but, as the enemy knew that Jockway was hunting them with a settled purpose, it was certain that they would retaliate in kind.

And the odds were in their favor.

Moreover, Saul expected to share whatever fate was marked out for the miner.

He glanced at Buck's face; it gave no evidence of fear.

"I'd like ter ask," calmly remarked Jockway, "ef this woman is the same who helped ye do fur Sammy Dean."

"I am she," the woman replied, with a light laugh.

There was melody in the laugh, and, ally of thieves and ruffians that she was, that strange air of refinement and mild innocence clung to her even as she held her revolver ready for use.

"What's yer name?"

"Liz Lorimer."

"Sometimes called 'Rosebud'?"

"Yes."

"You're the one!"

Buck Jockway drew a deep breath, and then looked his enemies over carefully. He had come a long distance on his mission of vengeance and, by their own confession, the guilty parties were found, but, in Western parlance, they "had the drop on him."

Had he sought them only to be beaten in the end?

His critical glance was duly observed by Hardy.

"It goes without saying, Jockway, that you have a gun in your pocket, and, of course, you are considering how you can use it on us without getting tunneled. Think twice before you try the experiment! Bear in mind that I, like you, am a Western man. I defy any man to beat me with a six. Now, I have the drop dead on you, and if you shove your fin to yank out a gun, I shall pull the trigger!"

Buck gave due heed to this address, but preserved his impenetrable calmness.

"You've got a scheme, I s'pose."

"We have."

"What is it?"

"We demand your surrender!"

"B'Judas! you kin take it out in demandin'!"

"Do you refuse?"

"Bet yer life!"

"I am about to order my men to advance and bind you. While they do this I shall keep my gun bearing on you, and if you raise a finger to 'draw,' or to touch them hostilely, I shall shoot you dead! How is it?—will you let us take you alive?"

CHAPTER XIII.

A HOT FIGHT FOR THE PARDS.

"I'll shoot the man that tries ter lay hands on me!"

Buck Jockway threw back the retort savagely, and his rough, broad face grew ominous to behold. His calmness during the last few minutes had not been natural; he was, within, like a surging torrent, and it cut him to the quick that he should have been lured into such a trap.

"Do you think you can fire before I can?" retorted Hardy, angrily.

"I kin try."

"Try it, and I'll drop you! I swear it! Men, advance and seize the prisoner!"

"Wait!" Jockway requested.

"Well?"

"I'm a rough old rooster, without chick, child or relation, an' ef I go under thar won't be no tears shed; it don't matter no great, anyhow. But I ax one favor—afere the shootin' begins, jest let this boy go away."

He pointed to Sunrise Saul.

"Why should we?"

"He ain't in the swim; he only come hyar ter act as my guide."

"But you want him to go and tell the police!"

The miner's eyes flashed.

"I'm able ter hoe my own row, mister!" he declared. "I don't ask no help from the perleece, nor want it. No; ef the boy is allowed ter go, he shall go in good faith, say nothin' ter nobody, an' come hyar no more."

"Gammon!"

"I mean it; I'll order him ter do it. Fur myself I ask no odds, but the boy is young, an' he's got a mother. Don't be hard on him, when his only offense was ter show a stranger the way hyar!"

These words deeply affected Saul. Some of the men on the Express train had give the opinion that the man from Lame Horse was an impostor, a thief and a ruffian. How very different he was proving himself!

For himself he had no word of excuse or entreaty, but he bent his proud neck, as it were, and humbled himself to his enemies to ask mercy for his boy pard.

"No, you don't!" exclaimed Hardy. "The boy is here with you, and he must take the consequences."

"But I swear—"

"Not a word more; it won't work. The boy must stand the rifle. Men, advance and take your game!"

The two toughs put away their revolvers and advanced. Jockway did not even rise, but he looked like a lion at bay as he sat and boldly faced his foes.

Would he offer resistance?

Sunrise Saul tried to think of something he could do. Clearly, he could expect no mercy, and, in any case, he was anxious to help Buck.

Liz Lorimer glided forward with a willowy motion, and pointed her revolver toward Saul.

"Keep still, little boy!" she ordered, in her strangely musical voice, "or I will shoot you!"

"Woman, are you human?" the youth impulsively demanded.

"Very much so; human enough to look out for Number One, and, if you disobey, to shoot you down!"

Through the gentle modulation of her voice ran a harder vein, which told that she meant all that she said.

But Saul had no further chance to intercede for Jockway. The toughs were near the miner's side, and Saul watched breathlessly. They put out their hands to lay hold of his muscular arms, and it looked as if he was going to yield tamely.

Appearances were never more deceptive.

Suddenly the miner moved, and he moved like a cyclone. His hands shot out; he seized one of the toughs and swept his person between himself and Hardy's revolver. Then Buck came up like a big dog, shaking off his smaller foes.

But Buck did not shake off his enemies. He had to deal with two of the worst and most desperate of North End criminals, and they were not only hard fighters, but men of muscle.

Both threw their weight upon the miner, grasping him as only experienced wrestlers can.

Hardy sprang to their aid. Chance was given him to shoot, but, from some motive, he did not wish to do so. Jockway was fighting like a tiger, whirling his two opponents around, but being as unsuccessful in his efforts to break their hold as he was to get out his revolver. Hardy swung up his arm, and then brought the butt of the revolver down upon Buck's head.

Saul could bear it no longer.

He started forward.

Liz Lorimer thrust her revolver almost into his face.

"Stop, or you die!" she hissed.

Determination showed in that utterance, but Saul was not to be daunted. He saw Buck, unable to defend himself, being beaten by Hardy, and he would have thought himself a coward to stand idle then.

His own eyes flashed with a spirit, and he flung up his hand sharply. He had aimed for Liz's wrist, and he did not fail. The blow took effect; the revolver went flying across the room; and then he sprang to Buck Jockway's aid.

There was sore need of aid from some source.

Hardy was striking with the revolver, while his aids managed to govern the miner's hands and prevent retaliation. Desperately though he struggled, Buck was succumbing to the attack, for the blows partially stunned him, and he had been beaten down to his knees.

Filled with zeal and heroism Saul wrenched the revolver away, and then dealt Hardy a blow which knocked him over like a ten-pin. Flushed with success the victor sailed into the other men, but he soon found that he had undertaken a large contract. Buck did not rise to help him as he had expected; the heavy blows of the revolver had had due effect, and the miner remained upon his knees without making any movement.

He was partially stunned.

Deprived of the help of his big friend, Saul had no chance against the superior force opposed to him.

He struggled manfully, but was soon overpowered.

"By the fiends! that was a hard rub!" Hardy then declared, with a sigh of relief.

"You should have taken my advice, other

used your revolvers," musically proclaimed Liz Lorimer.

"Guns make too much noise."

"Well, I hope you won't lose by it."

"We shall not. Early the coming morning we will do u our enemies for good. Boy," Hardy added, turning to Saul, "your ruffian ally seems incapable of hearing me, so you shall listen to the plan. We are about to shut you up in a secure place, but you will have only four hours of it. At two o'clock we shall take you out in a boat, tie weights to you, and sink you in the water."

Saul made no reply.

Jockway is a dangerous man; it is my life or his, and I am not ready to go under. As for you, you have seen fit to mix in with his game, and you will have to share his fate. You shall die, too!"

Still the young prisoner was silent. He comprehended that it would be a waste of breath to appeal to the men, and he would not humble himself to plead in vain.

Back Jockway was still held in awe by the ruffians, and they proceeded to hustle the parls away before the man from Lane Horse could recover.

This, however, he gave no sign of doing. He had to be carried to the prison already arranged, and this brought out no further sign of life than an uncomprehending motion of his eyes.

Back of the room where the capture had been made, was a long, narrow passage, and at the end of this was a second room. It was without any furniture save a table, and the kerosene lamp which stood upon it was absolutely the only other loose article to be seen.

Walls, ceiling, and floor were alike bare and barren.

"Here you stay!" Hardy observed, addressing Saul. "From now until two o'clock you will be left alone, if you keep quiet. I warn you that while any attempt to escape will be useless, we shall be in, if you make any racket, and do you up at once. If you are concerned as to the future life, you had better fix up your account while you wait, for you surely will die between two and three!"

Then the captors left the room. The doors closed behind them, and the prison room had no occupants besides Saul and Buck.

The latter lay motionless on the floor. Saul had entertained a feeble hope that his athletic friend was feigning unconsciousness, but this hope was as brief as it had been fragile.

When he had vainly spoken and called upon his friend, he knew that he was practically alone in the game.

He looked around eagerly.

Originally the room had been lighted by two windows, but they had been covered over on the inside with thick, solid boards, and the latter were held in place by what, judging from appearances, seemed to be long spikes, securely driven into a solid part of the wall.

As far as Saul could see, the only avenue of escape, either for man, or, as far as that was concerned, even a mouse, was by the door which led back to where the gang awaited them.

It was a bad fix, and the youth was left to face it alone.

Jockway was not then in the game, and might not be at all.

What was to be done? There was no chance to doubt Hardy's intention of killing them at the indicated hour. By that time the streets would be nearly deserted, and they could be conveyed to the water, and disposed of forever.

No way of escape was visible.

CHAPTER XIV

SAUL PROVES HIS PLUCK.

LOVE of life is strong within the human breast, and Sunrise Saul was not disposed to sit down and wait idly for the coming of the assassins.

"I must do something!" he thought, "but what? What can I do?"

He looked around again carefully. No ray of hope appeared. If the room had a weak point he could not see it, and there was certainly nothing with which to work.

Yet, he felt that he must do something.

"The floor is the only possible place!" he finally murmured thoughtfully.

Having arrived at that conclusion, he set out to investigate. The bare boards were fairly smooth, but they were old, and cracks of some width showed between them. These cracks were filled with dirt, the appearance of the room indicating that a carpet had been removed lately.

"If I could only raise one of the boards!" he thought.

He experimented and found that several of the boards were loose. If he had a chisel, or any pointed instrument of ordinary strength, he could, he felt sure, make the desired start.

"Why, here is one I could raise with a stout pocket-knife, even!" he muttered.

The knife was lacking, both he and Jockway having been relieved of all such articles. The only thing left in Saul's possession was a button-hook.

He was about to throw this away in disgust, but restrained himself. Insignificant as it was, it constituted the one thing upon which he could pin his hopes.

"Can I raise the board with that?" he wondered.

And then audibly made reply:

"Impossible!"

It did seem so, certainly, but he remembered that history told of some things stranger than that. It was not that strength was needed to raise the board, but that it was difficult to get at it.

Selecting a place, he proceeded to clear the crack of dirt. He then got a grip on the lower side of the board and pulled. It trembled, but did not come up. Somewhat encouraged, he cleared the bordering cracks of all obstacles along its length.

Then he made another trial, and the board came up slowly. A little later it was entirely removed.

Here was a decided gain, and it suggested a good many questions. Below lay a gap between the floor and the ceiling of the room below. Was it possible to pursue his efforts? Could he escape if time was given? Would the breaking of the lower ceiling call honest men to their aid, or foes to their destruction?

"Anyhow, I'm going ahead!" Saul decided.

Steadily he pressed down on the lower ceiling. It was not easy to stir it, but it gave way suddenly, at last, and a quantity of plastering went rattling down into the room below. Saul paused. What would be the result?

He expected to hear some sound—a cry or an exclamation—but none came. He peered down, but saw nothing but darkness.

Considerably encouraged, he enlarged the aperture, removing laths and plastering until the opening was as large as he desired. Then he held down the lamp and made a survey.

A furnished room was visible, with a bed standing directly below where he was. No occupant of bed or room, however, was to be seen.

A way of escape appeared to be open, but how could he manage it? Clearly, he could not carry ponderous Buck Jockway out, and he hated to leave the man, even while he went for help.

What could he do?

Even as he mentally asked the question, there was a stir behind him, and he turned to see the miner regarding him with an intelligent air.

"Wal, I'll be blowed!" Buck muttered.

"Are you better?" Saul eagerly asked.

"Better? Thar's a mule inside my head, an' he's a-kickin' me ev'ry jump. Say, b'Judas! them cusses did me up. Hey?"

"Yes."

"But I'm still on deck!"

The miner struggled to his feet.

"B'Judas!" he added, "my head's about cracked open, but it ain't all gone. Sa-ay, what's up?"

"We are in Hardy's power."

"I remember," was the reply, and the miner flushed deeply. "Them fellers got the best o' me; I'm durned ashamed ter say they did; but they lit on me in sech a way that they had me foul. All the muskle ain't in the West; them toughs was strong as buffler-bulls!"

Buck certainly was deeply chagrined by the fact that he had been so discomfited, but his ally brought his thoughts back to practical matters by explaining the situation.

"I think we can get out," he added.

"Course we kin, an' we'll do it right quick. Old Buck Jockway is hisself ag'in, an' he don't git laid out no more. B'Judas! I'd give a bushel o' nuggets fur a six-shooter, but I ain't got none. Pard, you drop down on the bed, an' I'll foller!"

Saul needed no urging, and the work was soon done. Both dropped to the room below. The bed creaked under their weight, but no alarm sounded.

The miner appeared to be himself once more, and his manner was confident.

"We're on the groun' floor?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Wal, we'll go quiet-like ter the front door, an' then you kin slip out."

"I? What about yourself?"

"I stay hyar!"

"What do you mean?"

"I don't leave until I settle with Arad Boyne!"

"Are you crazy?"

"I may be."

"I think you are. Where are your weapons?"

"Ain't got any."

"Do you remember that Hardy has several men with him?"

"Yes."

"And that they worsted you once?"

"They can't do it ag'in!" growled the miner. "I ain't in the habit o' bein' done up twice. Say no more; I'm bound ter stay an' polish off my enemies!"

"Then I stay, too."

"Come off!"

"I mean it."

The speakers looked at each other in humor not of the best. Jockway showed bulldog resolution which indicated that nothing could turn him from his purpose, and Saul felt equally stubborn. Buck did not test his determination rigidly, but finally replied:

"All right, pard; you keep with me, an' I'll take keer of you. Come on!"

He opened the door, and they passed out into the hall. A light still burned there dimly. The unguarded front door would have been a strong temptation to any one less set than Jockway, but he resolutely turned toward the stairs.

They were soon on the second floor.

"Soft an' easy!" Buck whispered. "We want ter take 'em by surprise, an' twist their weapons right away from 'em. See?"

"Yes."

Saul answered dubiously, but his big friend had no such doubts. Carefully he opened the door and peered into the room.

No one was visible.

The gas was burning as it had been when the miner was last there, but the decoys were not visible. One thing he did see which made his eyes glitter; two revolvers lay upon the table.

Quickly he crossed the floor and secured these coveted articles. One was his own—a ponderous forty-one caliber—and he was thoroughly himself with it in his hand.

"They've found out that we've escaped," he observed, "an' are in our former prison-room. Foller me, an' we'll round 'em up!"

Jockway meant more than he said, and did not intend to leave until he had avenged Sammy Dean's death. That, in his opinion, could be done only by killing Arad Boyne.

He entered the passage, but suddenly stopped short. The door of their former prison was secured with a chain—clearly, the enemy were not there.

Jockway turned a puzzled face toward his ally.

"Whar be they?" he asked.

"Somewhere below, probably."

"We'll lay fur them, an' fix 'em when they show up. I'll squat down behind this chair; you crouch aside the writin'-machine."

The article dignified by the last name was a desk, pure and simple. As Saul moved forward he noticed that the drawer was open. Sheets of paper of all sizes were visible, some still unblemished and some written upon.

His careless glance would have seen that, and no more, had not his movements been checked by sight of a written name.

"Ralph Enonbridge!"

It stared Saul in the face, as it were, and suggested a good deal to him. He stopped; he looked eagerly through the drawer.

Several sheets of paper were covered with erratic pen-work. The name of Ralph Enonbridge, and oft-repeated figures, predominated, and the whole was like the copy-work of an advanced pupil in school.

It was significant in view of the fact that it was the claim of the defense that other hands had juggled with Ralph's books.

"Hide, young pard!" repeated Jockway.

The direction was not obeyed; the youth had seen something even more striking and significant.

Side by side lay a big brass key and a cake of wax, and in the wax was an impression. How much it suggested to Sunrise Saul!

CHAPTER XV.

SURPRISES FOLLOW.

SAUL lifted the key and the wax. Working blindly, when with the Enonbridges, he had suggested that some one had tampered with Ralph's key, and had learned of the visit of a

man named Hardy. Now, in the possession of one particular Hardy, he found this evidence.

The key was a large, brass one, such as would naturally be used in a store-door, and appeared to be of fresh manufacture.

Triumph beamed in Saul's eyes.

Clearly, he argued, Hardy had been in Ralph's house, obtained an impression of the genuine key, and then had a bogus one made.

"What in Judas hev ye found?" Jockway asked.

For answer Saul put the wax in a tin box which was at hand, and then thrust that and the key into his pocket.

He was about to leave the desk when he saw an envelope addressed to Hardy. A letter was within; he withdrew it and saw the name of "Liz Lorimer" signed to it. This was evidence worth preserving, and, though he could not stop to read it then, he put it in his pocket with the other articles.

"Say, d'ye want any more stuff?" Buck asked, with some irritation.

"This is valuable matter, friend Jockway."

"In what way?"

The question sounded from a point near the door, and both Saul and Buck turned quickly. A man was standing there whose entrance had not been observed even by the keen-eyed Westerner.

Jockway swung his revolver around, but the unknown at once held up an empty hand.

"Hold hard, messmates!" he advised. "We needn't fight, for I have no bone to pick with you."

"What are you doin' hyar?" growled Buck, suspiciously.

"The same interrog might be flung back at you, cully, but it won't pay. Unless you want to get masticated, I advise you to slope!"

"Why?"

"Hardy and his heelers will soon return."

"You know of them, it seems."

"Of course I do, blockhead; but you are a fool to stay here and talk it over. Relying upon the supposed strength of your prison, Hardy and his pals have all gone out to absorb liquid ruin, but they will soon come around again. Jockway, curb your Samsonian desire to pull this house down on Hardy, and get out while you can. You don't want this boy killed, do you?"

"I want Hardy."

"You're a fool to try for him now. Go away, and I may succeed in giving you a lift, later."

"What's yer name?"

"Mose Deegan."

"Friend o' Hardy's?"

Deegan made an impatient gesture.

"Should I advise you to slope if I were? Come, man, don't be a fool! Go away, and let your crusade against Arad rest until Sunrise Saul has solved the Enonbridge mystery!"

"What do you know about that?" Saul demanded.

"More than you do."

"Then you're the man I want."

"I'm the man you can't have—at least, not at present. You have some evidence in your hands, just now, and I advise you to hold fast to it. But you are not wholly on, yet; there's a discovery coming that will amaze you, and I presume that I shall be the one to make it public."

"Mr. Deegan, if you will tell me—"

"I won't! Will you get out of this, or will you stay and be wiped out by Hardy's gang?"

Deegan spoke impatiently, sharply, and Buck, glancing toward Saul, reluctantly made answer:

"We'll go. I reckon my vengeance kin keep, an' I see that I hev no right ter take others inter the jam. But, stranger, I'd like ter see you outside—"

"You can't!" declared Deegan. "Go slow, old fellow, and you shall have the right end of the tangle later; I'll see you again. But, for now, I'm off; you can stay here and get chewed up if you wish."

With these words the man turned and left the room.

Jockway shook his head as though he did not approve of the course of events, but unhesitatingly observed:

"We'll go, too, pard. Ef we kin help the Enonbridges by bein' a little slow on the wait, we don't want ter let the chance slip. Come on!"

Really, the miner's concern for Saul was his guiding principle. If he had not been afraid that his young friend would get hurt he would not have left, and, as it was, he could not help

cherishing a secret hope that they would meet Hardy on the way out.

They did not, and they were soon in the street.

No one interfered with their retreat.

"Whar away?" Buck then asked.

"I think I shall go home, at once."

"What's the letter ye found?"

"I don't know, yet."

"I'd sort o' like ter, afore we part."

"You shall."

No other place being convenient, they went to a saloon. There, seated at a table, they read the letter. It was as follows:

"DEAR VILLAIN:—Yours has been received, and I hasten to answer. I shall be ready to go East whenever you are. I have been having a jolly time with Sammy Dean's dollars; have kept a carriage about all the time, and have visited all our old friends. I like to drop in to the old resorts and set 'em up for the boys. Wonder if Sam Dean's partner has returned to Lame Horse, yet, and found his money gone?"

"I feel confident as to our new enterprise. The stake is well worth playing for, and I, for one, shall be on my muscle; we must win. We have made fools of our Western brethren many a time and oft, and it will be the simplest of all easy jobs to do up those Eastern clams. There ain't brains enough east of the Mississipp' to stock a jack-rabbit."

"Come home, dear fellow Villain, and we will get away to the East and bamboozle our game. Whoop! I get excited when I think of a million—more or less—at stake. Come! I am weary of inactivity. Let us do something villainous! Hurrah for the Enonbridges."

"With love, I remain your unterrified demon and tiger-cat,"

LIZ LORIMER."

The letter bore date of a year previous, and appeared to be written from Denver.

"She's a devil!" Buck muttered.

"What can be their game here, to which they refer?"

"Ralph Enonbridge, of course."

"He has not a million."

"Hardly!"

"This letter perplexes me. Do you remember that Mose Deegan said there were some points in the game we had not yet grasped?"

"Yes."

"What did he mean?"

"Give it up!"

Jockway was not so much interested in the Enonbridge case as Saul was, and, even if he had been, he would not have found it possible to answer the question. Neither he nor his young partner could understand the mysterious allusions to the Enonbridges, nor why such an effort was being made to ruin Ralph.

It occurred to Saul, when considering the reference to the "million," that Ralph's wife might, really, be the object of the attack, and that he had been put into trouble in order to get him out of the way.

After some further conversation the pards left the saloon and separated.

The destination of each was his home, but the two lay in different directions, Buck's temporary lodging place being at a hotel on Causeway street.

Saul wanted a car for the South End, but the hour was so late that such a conveyance was not to be found easily. He walked south along Washington street until he reached Court street and then paused on the corner.

A few minutes passed, and then a hack came briskly toward him from the direction of Scolay Square. He gave attention to it as one will to what seems a trivial matter, when time hangs heavily on his hands.

The vehicle had one occupant only, and that was a lady.

As they turned into Washington street the light fell squarely upon her face, and Saul stood like one dumfounded. He had recognized her, and the recognition was a great surprise. He remained gazing blankly after the vehicle.

"Emmie Enonbridge!" he muttered, mechanically.

This was something wholly unexpected. That the girl should be in Boston at that hour of night showed that something unusual was afoot.

Was there some new complication at Somerville?

Anxious to be of all the service to the family that he could, he ran after the vehicle and soon overtook it. A call to the driver caused him to pause, and then Saul hurried to the open window.

"Miss Enonbridge!" he saluted.

Emmie looked at him in surprise.

"You here!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, Miss Enonbridge. What is wrong? Can I help you?"

Her expression was so troubled that the first question seemed very timely.

"This is a surprise to me," murmured the girl.

"And to me, also. I thought you were still at Somerville."

"I wish I were!" sighed Emmie. "This work is wearing upon me, and I am as nervous as can be. But you, my boy—I will not trouble you."

"But I shall be glad to help you, miss."

"Then enter the hack, and I will explain as we go on."

Saul obeyed. Emmie directed the driver to continue, and they rolled away down Washington street.

CHAPTER XVI.

AFFAIRS BECOME MIXED.

EMMIE remained silent so long that Saul turned to her and was about to speak, but she forestalled him.

"There is nothing but trouble for us!" she murmured, in an unsteady voice.

"What has happened now, Miss Enonbridge?"

"Nothing new, only I am trying to get information."

"It is late—"

"Uncle Ralph is so placed that we cannot stop for small obstacles."

"True, but—"

"If my judgment is as good as my courage, I hope to get important news, to-night. I have not undertaken this errand without a clear object in view, and we shall soon see how it will transpire. I shall be glad of your company, for this big city, and these lonely streets, are not a fit place for me at this hour. I realize this, but I must go on."

The hack had turned down Essex street, and it came to a stop at the corner of Harrison avenue.

"Here I will leave you for a moment," she added. "Our journey is only just begun, but I must ask for some information before going further. Please remain in the hack, for it would injure my chances if the parties I am to ask information of should see any one with me."

She had alighted while she spoke.

"Have you far to go?" Saul doubtfully asked.

"No."

"This is not a safe locality."

"I have only a step to go, and will soon return. I cannot be a coward when I have so much to work for. Wait here for me!"

She hurried along until Oxford street was reached. On the corner she paused for a moment and looked back. It seemed to Saul that her courage wavered, but she soon resumed her way and disappeared around the corner.

"She is a heroine!" the youth thought.

"Young feller," observed the hackman, "you'd ought ter gone along, too."

"I believe you."

"This ain't a fit place for a modest young woman like her to be at this hour, without a protector."

"We are in trouble, and she is trying to help others out," was the boy's vague reply.

"I wish her good luck, for I kin see she's every inch a lady, but this is just the region that such a woman ought ter keep away from."

These words added to Saul's apprehensions, and, when several minutes had passed without any change in the situation, Emmie's prolonged absence began to grow serious, he thought.

After some delay he walked to Oxford street. Emmie was not visible.

Looking south as far as he could see, there was no human being on the street, nor were there signs of life about any of the houses. What had become of Miss Enonbridge was a mystery, and he began to be worried. She had said that she had "only a step" to go, and would soon return.

What had occurred to delay her?

Was she in any of the houses?

Or had she met with harm?

These questions became more and more important as the minutes wore on. Emmie did not return, and he was left to face the probability that she had run into fresh trouble. He consulted the hackman, after which they laid the case before a policeman.

From the latter they obtained but little sympathy. Accustomed to the criminal side of life, he could not bring himself to think well of any one placed as the missing girl was. His indifference disgusted Saul, and as he did not know in what way to request aid, he soon dropped the blue-coat.

But Emmie did not return. An hour passed—two hours—three hours.

Saul was patient and persevering, and he remained where he had been directed to await her until all hope that she would come was gone.

He then went to a police station, but received only limited courtesy, and there the work ended. Tired, sleepy, discouraged and alarmed, he went home to get what little sleep he could.

Early the following morning he set out for Somerville, and, once there, was soon at the Enonbridge house. He rung the bell; the door opened; and there stood—Emmie, herself, bright, pleasant and smiling!

Saul suffered another attack of amazement, but Miss Enonbridge quickly exclaimed:

"You poor fellow! I know that I have made you no end of trouble—but it was no more than I had."

"I am astonished to see you here in safety," the youth admitted.

"No doubt; but come in and you shall hear all about my adventure. It is a wonder that I am able to tell about it."

In the parlor they found Mr. James Enonbridge and Ralph's family. Saul was cordially welcomed, and then Emmie made her explanation.

"Among Uncle Ralph's papers," she said, "I found a letter directed to Hardy, and purporting to be from a person on Oxford street, Boston. It was not important, strictly speaking, but it showed that the writer knew about Hardy. Anxious to help Uncle Ralph, I left this house unknown to any one, to see the aforesaid writer."

"This is how I came to be in Boston; now I'll briefly tell what happened to me."

"I was imprudent to go to the house, and I now realize it, but I was ambitious. I rung the bell; I was admitted; and all seemed going well, but, instead of seeing the person I sought, I was compelled to remain. They fastened me in a room, and there I was kept for hours. I should be there now had I not managed to pick the lock of the door with a wire, and thus get out. You may be sure I was not long in getting home."

"Such, Saul, is the story in few words. To grandpa I have told it in detail, but it is not necessary to repeat it now. Of one thing rest assured—I shall act Donna Quixota no more, but let others do the dangerous work."

"Now, business presses, so let us speak of more important things. We have been going over the whole of Ralph's case in full, and I have drawn up a document to give to his lawyer."

"And ably written it is," added James Enonbridge.

"Let Mr. Maynard read it," pursued Emmie. It is an important moment in a boy's life when a young lady dignifies him with the prefix of "Mr." for the first time, but pretty as Emmie was, Saul Maynard remained calm.

After he had taken the indicated paper, the rest of the party gave their attention to other points connected with Ralph's case, and the amateur detective had all the time he wanted to consider Emmie's well-written document.

When he had meditated upon it, he rejoined the party.

"Do you think we have made out a strong case?" Mr. Enonbridge asked.

"No!"

"You do not?"

"No, sir."

"Why not?"

"As far as generalities go, this is all right; but I fail to see that it specifies any particular person as having plotted against Ralph."

"We can't specify any one," Emmie answered.

"Yet you said that you went to Boston to see some one who knew about Hardy. If so, why is not Hardy mentioned herein?"

"Because that clew, which never impressed me as being reliable, has been found useless. I did think that some one might have impersonated my friend, Mr. Hardy, but the discovery of his portrait, in this house, proves that he was the genuine Hardy, and he is above suspicion."

"I doubt it!"

"What?"

"I doubt it!"

Saul made the assertion with emphasis, and Emmie showed signs of resentment.

"Remember that he is my friend!" she said, reprovingly.

"Do you know him well?"

"Very well."

"Then I am afraid that you do not choose your friends wisely."

"Saul!" sternly interrupted Mr. Enonbridge, "it is not to your credit to thus address a lady, and this particular lady is my granddaughter."

"Excuse me, sir, but I think I can prove all that I assert," was the steady reply. "We are all liable to be mistaken, and Miss Enonbridge

comes under that head. I hope she has been mistaken, for I think that the man Hardy is positively branded as a villain."

"Impossible! Why should we listen to him, grandfather?" demanded Emmie, with some signs of temper.

"Have patience, Miss Enonbridge; let me tell what I know, together with what I hope to prove. Hardy left Denver with the avowed intention of carrying on this plot against Ralph. Gaining access to this house, he took an impression of Ralph's key, in wax, and then had a bogus key made. He had been practicing to imitate Ralph's writing, so that he could 'doctor' the books, and, when all was ready, he began work. Several times he took small sums from the store, and the grand stroke came when he robbed it, tampered with the books, and left the proof to ruin Ralph!"

"I say this is false!" declared Emmie, forcibly.

"Wait!" swiftly replied Saul. "Here is the wax, with the impression still in it; here is the scribbling he did to get on to Ralph's way of writing; here is the bogus key!"

He laid out the articles as he spoke, and his companions gazed at them in wonder—all but Emmie. Her eyes flashed angrily.

"This is an insult to me!" she declared.

"Once more, wait! I have more to say, and it seems to concern you, Miss Enonbridge!"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SUSPENDED SWORD FALLS.

EMMIE did not seem at all pleased.

"Grandfather," she said, with venom one would hardly have expected from a young lady usually so meek, "I think it is high time for us to dismiss our boy helper. He has taken the bit in his mouth, as it were, and is running away!"

"I crave your indulgence for a moment longer," Sunrise Saul calmly replied. "What I have to say next refers to a matter of penmanship. I have here a letter written by a certain Liz Lorimer, a woman known as an ally of thieves and villains, to Hardy. In the letter she refers to the attack upon the Enonbridges. Now, having seen the document which Miss Emmie has drawn up for Ralph's lawyer, I find it to be in precisely the same writing as the Liz Lorimer letter! How are we to explain that?"

Emmie had risen as he spoke. Her face flushed, and something more than anger was visible in her expression. Dismay was there to be seen.

Saul Maynard was a close observer, for one so young, and her appearance did not impress him favorably.

The suspicious circumstances he had encountered did not vanish, as he really had hoped.

The girl's dismay once more gave place to anger.

"You miserable young pudding-head!" she cried, her usual refinement giving place to undisguised coarseness, "what in perdition do you mean! I have a good mind to smack you in the jaw!"

James Enonbridge, and Ralph's wife, were silent in amazement. Had they heard aright? Was it really Emmie who used such language?

"You get a move on you, and shuffle out of this house," the girl added, "or I'll throw you through the window!"

She had the scene all to herself; even Saul was silent. When he saw that Emmie's writing and that of Liz Lorimer were identical he knew he had chanced upon some alarming mystery, but the swift rush of events had not given him time to analyze the evidence carefully.

Upon him there now flashed a conviction which, after he had learned so much, he could not have helped studying out—that Emmie was in league with Hardy in the plot against Ralph.

Just then the bell rung, and Mr. Enonbridge's eldest grandson opened the door without consulting any one.

Three men entered—all of whom were well-known to Sunrise Saul. They were Buck Jockway, Abner Plunket and Mose Deegan.

"Hullo, pard!" cried the man from Lane Horse, bluffly. "Hyar we be, ag'in! I've come ter bid ye good-by!"

"You have?" returned Saul, mechanically.

"Bet yer life! I shall soon be on my way back ter Lane Horse, fur my work hyer is done. Arad Boyne, alias Hardy, is my prisoner!"

He looked at Emmie, and she turned deathly pale.

"Strikes ye hard, don't it?" he growled.

"Don't like ter have yer pal in quod. Hey?"

"Sir?" she cried.

"Oh! come now, don't put on no airs hyar; ye can't fool me as you did poor Sammy Dean."

My blood will never be on your hands as his is?"

"You wretch!" she cried, "how dare you address me thus?"

"Sir," interposed Mr. Enonbridge, with dignity, "remember that you address my granddaughter!"

Jockway laughed shortly.

"Your granddaughter!" he retorted; "not much, I don't! Why, man alive, that thar female is Liz Lorimer, with a dozen other names; one of the worst thieves and confidence women o' the West, and one o' the murderers o' my pard, Sammy Dean!"

"You lie!" hissed the girl, furiously.

"Hyar's my proof!"

Jockway pointed to Mose Deegan, who bowed gracefully and moved forward.

"I know the crew from A to Z," he observed, quietly. "Old gentleman, when you were on the train you had a mysterious letter pinned to your coat by a party to you unknown. That party was me, Mose Deegan. I told you in that letter that you were not onto all the points in the game. Lots of truth in that, old gentleman."

"You've been bamboozled the worst way. This woman is not your granddaughter at all. The real Emmie Enonbridge is in the West, held prisoner while these sharks work their game; and Liz Lorimer has come East, lived on you for a year, and passed herself off for your granddaughter. If there is a she-demon out, it's her."

"You speak falsely!" the old man cried.

"I speak the truth. I can prove it, and, for that reason, Liz will not deny it. Eh, Liz?"

"I admit the whole game," the woman bitterly replied, "but, mind you, Mose Deegan, I know how to deal with traitors. I'll have your life for this!"

Deegan laughed unconcernedly.

"You'll never get the chance. Boyne, alias Hardy, is under arrest, and I can swear that I heard him admit that it was he who broke into the store and did the job credited to Ralph. But he won't ever be tried for that job!"

"Right!" agreed Buck Jockway; "I've agreed ter let the law take its course, an' him an' you, woman, go West ter be tried fur murderin' Sammy Dean."

The woman's eyes glittered dangerously, and her hand sought a fold in her dress. Alert Buck sprung forward just in time to seize her hand as she drew a revolver.

He wrested the weapon away.

"Can't let ye do it, an' you've got enough ter answer fur now," he coolly observed.

"Man," exclaimed James Enonbridge, "will you drive me mad? Emmie is my granddaughter—"

"Oh! let up!" requested Mose Deegan, impatiently. "You tire me. Did you ever have a brother Ephraim?"

"Yes."

"Where is he now?"

"I don't know; he left home many years ago, and we have never heard from him since."

"Hear now, then, Ephraim Enonbridge, Western cattle-king, is dead. He left neither child nor will, but did leave a fortune which will not vary much from a cool million. The heirs, of course, are the three sons of your deceased brother, Amos Enonbridge, and yourself. Arad Boyne and Liz Lorimer knew of this, and they plotted to do you up. First of all the real Emmie was gotten into their power and imprisoned, and then Liz came East, claiming to be your granddaughter. As you had never seen the real Emmie, Liz had no trouble in fooling you, and, demon that she is, she can act the angel when she tries. After a fashion of their own they intended to do up Ralph, and the plot against him was begun. Are you now on?"

Nobody had a reply ready. Liz Lorimer knew that her game was up, and she sat in sullen silence.

It was Sunrise Saul who broke the painful pause.

"Deegan," he asked, "do you know who was the train-robber?"

"By gosh! it was her!" declared Abner Plunket, pointing to Liz. "Deegan knew it. That air money we raised at Haybottom fur the heathen got inter the heathen's hands most darned quick!"

"This is straight," Deegan added. "Hardy and Liz are the ones who have been working the road; they've been at it ever since they came East. You see, they get through with money on the jump, and had to keep their pockets filled. Hardy has done most of the working of the trains, but you will remember, Enonbridge, that your supposed granddaughter went away frequently under excuse of visiting

a friend up the Hudson. That friend was a myth, and, when she went off, it was to work the trains. As she was such a meek, modest-appearing little damsel, she had wonderful luck, both in getting money, and in hiding her share in it."

"Darn it! it was her that robbed me!" declared Plunket, in great disgust.

"It was, deacon, and I reckon you'll never see your money again."

Mr. Enonbridge looked bewildered and heart-broken, and Saul went to his side.

"Cheer up, sir!" he said, sympathetically; "your troubles are all over, and your real granddaughter shall be restored to you!"

All was proved that had been asserted.

First of all, it was shown that Ralph was innocent, and he was set free. Hardy was never tried for the robbery of the store, for he was wanted in the West, together with Liz Lorimer, for the graver crime of murdering Sammy Dean, the ex-pard of Buck Jockway.

The evil pair were taken there, and, in due time, Hardy expiated his crime on the gallows. Liz did not meet with this fate. She managed to get and take poison in her cell, and, after lingering for several weeks, she, too, passed to the unknown world.

Mose Deegan had once been their friend. His record was not of the best, and, when they were taken West, he skipped to parts unknown.

The real Emmie was found and brought East. James Enonbridge had found it hard to forget his liking for the cunning adventuress, but his real granddaughter proved so worthy a girl that he soon became wholly content.

The Enonbridge money was duly inherited, and Ralph removed to New York and went into business. All of the family now live together, and are happy and prosperous.

Buck Jockway is again a miner at Lame Horse. Sammy Dean having been avenged, his big partner settled down to work his mine. He succeeded well. He hired a worthy woman as housekeeper, and then followed two strokes of good luck. He made money out of his claim, and he married his housekeeper. He considers himself a very happy man.

Abner Plunket failed to recover his lost money, but his old neighbors passed a resolution of confidence in him, and never asked him to make good the loss.

Sunrise Saul had his share of good luck. James Enonbridge was generous and grateful, and, when he found that Saul wished to go to college, he promptly agreed to give enough out of his now large fortune to make this possible.

Young Maynard, no longer a news-agent, will graduate next year, after which he will enter business life as a lawyer.

THE END.

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